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A

TREATISE ON PSALMODY,

ADDRESSED TO THE

WORSHIPPERS OF GOD.

CONTAINING THE WORK OF

THE REV. WM. SOMMERVILLE, A. M.

WITH

SOME ADDITIONS,

PRINCIPALLY FROM

DRS. ANDERSON AND M'MASTERS.

"But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

PITTSBURGH:
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1837.

TO THE WORSHIPPERS OF GOD.

THE present is a time of great division in the Church of God. It becomes us, as witnesses for Christ, to examine well the grounds of these divisions. Let us lay aside all pre-conceived opinions, and decide according to reason. It is our duty to heal divisions, as far as possible, if we can do so consistently with our duty. Psalmody has been the cause of keeping separate many churches, at least, of increasing the breach—if ever they unite they must first unite on Psalmody. We hope the following pages will be beneficial for this purpose. We believe it to be impossible to unite on any except Scripture Psalms. We therefore hope, that those who read these pages, will be enabled to see that it is possible to unite in singing praise to God in his own words. We have given the whole of Somer-

ville's Treatise, and added a history of Psalmody, principally taken from Drs. ANDERSON and M'MASTERS. Seek the old paths and walk therein with care. We hope God will prosper this work in your hands. Remember, you are judging for or against the Lord—judge as for eternity.

THE PUBLISHER.

TO THE

PRESBYTERIANS OF HORTON.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE following pages, which in all probability never would have been written, but for your sakes, are addressed to you, in testimony of an anxious desire to promote your spiritual interests, and the purity of worship in your public meetings. Composed, as you know they must have been, in brief intervals of time, spent in travelling and ministering to the spiritual wants of my fellow-men, and when the mind courted repose, little uniformity can be expected in the style in which they are presented. If I have succeeded in expressing my ideas and stating my arguments perspicuously, I am little solicitous about the judgment which may be formed of the structure of the sentences.

The ingenuousness and promptitude, with which you submitted the feelings created by education, and strengthened by habit in favor of the sacred poetry of an amiable man, and elegant

writer, and consented to the introduction of the Songs of Zion, though in a less fascinating exterior, challenge my warmest admiration, and are joyfully received as an earnest that my labors among you, through the blessing of Christ, and the presence of his spirit, shall not prove to have been vain.

Doctor M'Master's "Apology for the Book of Psalms," the only work written upon the question which I have attempted to discuss, that has come into my hands, as it appears to present arguments, in favor of an inspired Psalmody, perfectly conclusive, I would rather have introduced and circulated but for the reasons following: It seemed easier to get a few pages upon the subject printed in the Province and put into your hands, and the hands of others, who may deem it worthy of their examination than to import from the States and sell the "Apology,"—much of the "Apology" is written in reply to the Divines on the opposite side, whose writings are not much, if at all known in Nova-Scotia,—and the line of argument which presented itself to my mind, afforded an opportunity of remarking upon other important subjects upon which very indefinite ideas are generally abroad.

I have in general expressed myself with the utmost decision; and I have only spoken as I felt

and still do feel. Perfectly satisfied that the ground upon which I trode was firm, why should I speak as one that doubted? No indulgence, nothing but justice is craved of those who may choose to examine what I have written, and submitted to the public upon your account. The man who discovers his own error is more of a conqueror, than one who, with the advantage of truth upon his side, confutes his adversary; and I shall most cordially thank him who shall point out the error into which I may have fallen, or the inconclusiveness of the argument which I have employed, as the instrument by whom a victory is obtained over my own perverse reasonings, without inquiring very particularly whether he be moved by a spirit of contention, ready to give him credit for being actuated by good will.

In accommodation to those who are disposed to think that no man who differs from them is wise or deserving of regard, except he be great, I have occasionally quoted from the very few works to which I have had access. They have not, however, been adduced as authority, except in relation to one point not necessarily connected with the grand subject of inquiry, the decision of which belongs to man; and I will not be answerable for the opinions of the writers, farther than they are expressed in the words which have been copied.

That this small publication may be the means, under the Head of the Church, of more fully convincing you of the propriety of the step you have taken since my entrance among you, and of exciting that spirit of calm and impartial inquiry which shall conduct to the discovery of truth and promotion of purity in the observance of divine institutions, is the fervent prayer of

Your servant for Jesus' sake,

W. S.

INTRODUCTION.

That it is the duty of Christians to celebrate the praises of God in the use of Songs, is too evident to him who is acquainted with the Holy Scriptures to require proof. The example of the Old Testament Church, to which we shall have occasion to refer more particularly afterwards, the example of our Saviour, with his Apostles, who, the last Supper having been finished, sung a hymn, (Matt. xxvi. 30,) the example of Paul and Silas when immured in the jail of Philippi, (Acts xvi. 25) and an Apostolic injunction, "Is any merry? let him sing Psalms," (Jas. v. 13,) are proofs sufficient of the correctness of ecclesiastical practice in every age, and of our obligation to walk in "the footsteps of the flock," in this solemn exercise. There are many circumstances which must render the celebration of praise an exercise peculiarly interesting to every citizen of Zion:—to him who is not merely a partaker of the form, but a subject of the power of Godliness. One only I shall mention. We enjoy more intimate fellowship with the spiritual world, and approach nearer to the

abodes of perfect happiness and uninterrupted peace. Praise is not, like many other religious acts, peculiar to this world, but lifts us up into the rank of Angels standing before the throne, and of the Spirits of just men made perfect. The time shall come when we shall no more read and investigate the Word of God, when we shall cease to wait upon, or to exercise the ministry of reconciliation, when private and social prayer shall no longer be offered up, when Baptism and the Lord's Supper shall have been superseded, but praise shall never case. Like charity, its immediate fountain, it "never faileth." No sooner is the Saint removed from the "earthly house of this tabernacle," than he is introduced into the choir above, who rest not day and night ascribing praises to a God of Holiness, and singing the Song of Moses, the Servant of the Lord, and the Song of the Lamb. Whoever desires to engage in an exercise adapted to promote oblivion of the trials and temptations, the privations and opposition, to which he is exposed in this present evil world, and to assist him in taking faith's realizing view of the joys which are before the face, and the pleasures which are at the right hand of God, and abide forever, let him engage in singing the praises of God.

But what are the songs which the saints ought to use? It is very obvious that God is not praised

in the use of every song. There is a perverted use of the musical, as of all other powers of man, by which God is dishonored, not praised—by which he is offended, not pleased. If we ascribe to God in our song, that which he does not claim for himself, if we exhibit a false view of the perfections of his character, of the doctrines of his word, or of the duty of man, instead of giving glory to God and being exercised according to Godliness, we are bestowing honor upon the creature of our own imagination, and ministering to the interests of error and corruption. The spirit and the language of the song must harmonize with the object which is contemplated in singing it, otherwise the object is forfeited in that degree, to which the poet has deviated from the proposed design, if not entirely. If these remarks be admitted, (and I am not aware of any exception to which they lie open,) it follows that we can duly praise an infinitely perfect God, only in the use of Songs which are infallibly correct, and if infallibly correct, such alone as have been given by the Spirit of the Highest. And when there are not songs supplied by the Holy Spirit, we must either be silent, or expose ourselves to the probable displeasure of the Lord, while we offer perhaps the blind or the lame in sacrifice.

Our present object is to strive to show that the

Church is furnished with a collection of Songs by the spirit of inspiration, which is designed for her use in every age, and in every situation, and is no less adapted to every age and situation in which the Church may be found, than designed for her use. It is unnecessary to say, that the collection to which I have reference, is that which forms a constituent part of the Old Testament, and is entitled THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

The evidence which we purpose to bring forward in support of the proposition, that these Psalms were given of God, for the use of the Church to the end of the world, in whatever country or in whatever state, rests upon the following four facts.

I. The Psalms are given by inspiration.

II. They were given to be sung by the members of the Church—the worshippers of God.

III. No subsequent book or books have been written by inspiration for the same purpose.

IV. The Book of Psalms is no less adapted to the present state of the Church, than to her state when they were originally written.

THE

PSALMS OF DAVID.

CHAPTER I.

Are the Psalms given by inspiration.

THE FIRST FACT which we are to ascertain is, that the Book of Psalms was written by Holy Men of God, moved by the Holy Ghost.

Concerning it, Gray, in his "Key to the Old Testament," thus writes:—"The Book of Psalms which in the Hebrew is entitled *Sepher Tehillim*, the Book of Hymns or Praises of the Lord, contains the productions of different writers. These productions are called, however, the Psalms of David, because a great part of them was composed by him, who for his peculiarly excellent Spirit was distinguished by the title of Psalmist. Some of them were penned before, and some after the time of David, but all of them by persons under the influence of the Holy Ghost, since all were judged worthy to be inserted into the Canon of Holy Writ. Ezra probably collected them into one book, and placed them in the order they now preserve, after they had been previously collected in part."

It is however a question of little comparative importance at what time, or by what person the Psalms were collected and arranged. One thing is certain, that they had been collected and arranged before the time of our Lord and his Apostles. They are designated a *Book* by our Lord himself. His words are,—"David himself saith in the Book of Psalms," showing that when he sojourned among men, the Songs of Zion had been collected into one volume. Paul, in one instance, quoting from a Psalm, mentions the place in the collection which it occupies. "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the *second* Psalm. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." No other proof is wanting that the collection of Psalms or Hymns which the Jews had in the days of our Saviour, is the same that we possess.

To the inspiration of this Book our Lord has given his testimony, and placed it, by his authority, upon the same footing with the other portions of the Old Testament. "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things might be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me." Luke xxiv. 44. Here is a pointed reference to the classification of the Scriptures which the Jews made, and a place is assigned to the Psalms no less elevated than to Moses or the Prophets. Now since "all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable," the Psalms demand our submission, as the dictates of the Holy Ghost, in the

same peremptory tone with the law which was promulgated, without the intervention of man, from the top of Sinia; we must receive them as equally profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, to promote the perfection of the man of God, with any other portion of Holy Writ.

The full extent to which the Son of God recognises the claim of the Book of Psalms, appears from the language which he employs, when speaking of a part. "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he? they say unto him the Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David *in Spirit* or *by the Holy Ghost*, call him Lord." It was neither arrogant nor blasphemous, therefore, in David to utter the following very definite language: "The *Spirit of the Lord spake* by me, and *his word* was in my tongue." His Son and Lord has pronounced it just. Paul has followed the example of his Lord in the ascription of the Psalms, not to man, but to the Holy Ghost. When he quotes the ninety-fifth Psalm, he introduces the quotation by these very emphatic words, "As the Holy Ghost saith." And Peter, before the day of Pentecost, standing up in the midst of the congregated disciples, says, "Men and Brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the *Holy Ghost spake* by the mouth of David;" and on the day of Pentecost, addressing the wondering multitude, calls David a Prophet in reference to the production of the sixteenth Psalm. To use the words of Gray, who has been already quoted, "The authority of those (Psalms) which we now possess, is

established likewise—by many intrinsic proofs of inspiration. Not only do they breathe through every part a divine spirit of eloquence, but they contain numberless illustrious prophecies that were remarkably accomplished, and are frequently appealed to by the evangelical writers."

In addition to the preceding evidence that the Psalms sustain a character equal to that of any other part of the Old Testament Scripture and come to us recommended by the same high sanction, let it be observed that Peter teaches us that the writings of the Apostles possess no greater authority, are distinguished by no more intrinsic excellence, make no larger demand upon our veneration, diligent perusal, and personal application than Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Adverting to the writings of his "beloved brother Paul" he says, "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the *other scriptures* unto their own destruction." It is true he puts forward the writings of Paul as *Scripture*, but in the same rank with the other scriptures. So far, however, from teaching us to give to them a preference, his manner of introducing them to notice, forms a sufficient answer to any, who might be disposed to neglect Moses or David, Isaiah or Ezekiel in the presence of the historians of Jesus, of the Apostle of the Gentiles, or of the beloved disciple.

I have been the more particular in specifying and proving the inspiration of the Book of Psalms,—that the writers of the Psalms were holy men of God, who spake and wrote as they

were moved by the Holy Ghost, because, this fact once established and received, one of the most daring objections that have ever been made to the use of the Psalms of David, is at once and forever removed out of the way of every man who respects the character of his God and his Redeemer,—of the Spirit who renews and infuses every good disposition. It has been objected that those Psalms, in many parts, breathe out cruelty, and contain language which it hardly becomes the lips of a Christian to utter,—it has been insinuated that the spirit of many of them is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, which dictates love to our enemies.

Now if the Psalms have been dictated by the Holy Ghost,—if by the Spirit of Christ who speaks not of himself, but speaks what he hears, the character of the author determines the character of the Book. An unholy person may assume the character, and speak the words of purity, a man of cruelty may write a book and transcribe in it the language of clemency and mercy; but a holy and a merciful man never can be supposed, without supposing a contradiction, to employ language impure and malicious, and calculated to excite or cherish impurity and revenge in the hearer or the reader. Whoever, therefore, thinks he discovers cruelty and revenge or any other antichristian principle set forth and encouraged in the Book of Psalms, must either deny that it has been given by inspiration, or admit that he totally misunderstands its spirit, its language and its tendency. If the objection be-

fore us be founded in truth, the Book must be expunged from the Bible. Its pretensions are spurious, and its presence is a stigma upon the character of God. But we have already seen that its claims are supported by the same authority which sanctions the other scriptures, and that the denial of its inspiration involves the rejection of the Old Testament and the New. If God, the author, be holy, there is nothing unholy in the Book of Psalms, or calculated to encourage unholiness; if God be merciful, there is nothing in it inconsistent with mercy, or calculated to encourage cruelty; if God be love, there is nothing in it contrary to the spirit of love, or calculated to encourage hatred or revenge: in one word, there cannot be any thing in the Book opposed to any perfection of the Divine character, or failing to recommend conformity to God upon the part of man. Whoever, therefore, quarrels with the spirit or matter of the Psalms, sets himself in opposition, not to man, but God, for he implicitly imputes to God, whatever he charges upon his word.

Or again. The inspiration of the Psalms and of the New Testament being taken for granted, if the Psalms do not manifest the same spirit, inculcate the same doctrines, enjoin the same duties, prohibit the same sins which are set forth in the New Testament, it follows that the Holy Ghost is inconsistent with himself. But it would be no difficult matter, to shew that the spirit, the doctrines, the precepts, the prohibitions—in a word, the design and tendency of both are the same. And we know that the old Testament

saints—we know that David possessed and exemplified that very character which the gospel of Christ recommends. Will any man venture, upon mature consideration, to set declarations from the pen of David, especially remembering that it was guided by the spirit of God, the expression of whose inflexible justice, of whose detestation of sin, of whose determination to punish it,—to all which holy men of God have been enabled—to which David was enabled to say Amen,—he may have mistaken for the language of unforgiving cruelty; will any man venture to set declarations, the spirit and design of which may be misunderstood, in opposition to facts? Are malignity and revenge rashly to be imputed to the man, who found his enemy in a cave,—his enemy who had attempted his life, who was at that moment in pursuit of him, attended by three thousand men, that he might overtake and kill him, and would not put forth his hand against his person, though urged by his followers? Will we attribute malignity and revenge to him who, coming into the camp of his adversary by night, and finding him and his men asleep, neither injured him nor would permit another to do it though solicited, and could show the sword and cruise of water which he had carried away from his head, a testimony at once of his own power to have taken revenge, and of the simplicity and ingenuousness of his temper and conduct? Was the man malignant and revengeful who, when an ungrateful rebel in the day of adversity cursed him and vilified his character, could say, profoundly resigned to the award of Heaven, "Let him alone, and

let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him." And shall we join with the many who have conspired to vilify the character and the words of the sweet Singer of Israel, even at the hazard of charging the spirit of Christ with want of consistency? God forbid. Rather let us submit every thought, every feeling, in the presence of infinite wisdom, and be prepared to pluck out the right eye or to cut off the right hand which offends us.

But it has happened most felicitously, in relation to the question before us, that the Psalms most obnoxious to the censures of a spurious, and an unsanctified sentimentality, have been cited by an Apostle, as the languago of the Spirit. The sixty-ninth and hundred-and-ninth would seem, when approached by the opponents of the Old Testament Psalms, to excite more than common heat. I shall produce a few verses from each. Ps. lxix. 25, 27, 28. "Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."—cix. 6, 7, 8, "Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office." Admitted: the language is strong. All may not be able to reconcile it with other declarations and petitions. Are they who cannot, at liberty to conclude that it is really inconsistent with love to our enemies? Let us hear how Peter speaks of those Psalms. Acts i.

16, 20, "Men and Brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the *Holy Ghost* by the mouth of David *spake* before concerning Judas who was guide to them that took Jusus. For it is written in the Book of Psalms, let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take." Of the twentieth verse the former member is from the sixty-ninth, and the latter from the hundred-and-ninth Psalm. Observe, (1) he views both as prophetic, (2) he pronounces both spoken by the Holy Ghost. Of course both must be in all points correct, worthy of a merciful God, and becoming the lips of a servant of God, though no man were able to explain them.

Once more, and I dismiss this branch of the inquiry. Is such language as this cruel?—"Cut them off in thy truth."—"I will bring again from the depth of the sea; that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of enemies, the tongue of thy dogs in the same.—Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous." Is it inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel? to use it with the character of the christian? Mark the consequences. Then the words of Paul moved by the Holy Ghost, not merely writing to the church, but to a bishop of the church, must share in the same condemnation. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works." (2 Tim. iv. 14.) If the spirit manifested in such portions of the Psalms as those quoted be unchristian, by what spirit shall we say the Apostle was actuated? If the Psalms be inconsistent

with the Gospel, then Paul must be inconsistent with himself, for in the sixteenth verse we read, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." Let him who is straitened in the use of some portions of Zion's songs, explain the consistency of the fourteenth and sixteenth verses of the fourth chapter of the second epistle to Timothy, and he shall find himself near an enlargement. Another consequence follows. The saints enter into the regions of love and peace, with all the cruelty and revenge of earth about them. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Finally, God must delight in carnage and be chargeable with encouraging cruelty in his people. The great God has a supper to which the fowls of heaven are invited, that they may "eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all, free and bond, both small and great." "I heard, says John, another voice from heaven saying, come out of her my people." This must be the voice of God himself, for who else claims the saints for his own? And what does the voice proclaim in addition to a call to come forth from among the children of mystical Babylon? "Reward her even as she has rewarded you, and double unto

her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.—Rejoice over her thou Heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." Reader are you fully satisfied with the spirit and the language of Paul, of the spirits of just men made perfect, of Angels, and of the great God himself? Then why should you be offended with the Son of Jesse?

CHAPTER II.

Were the Psalms given to the Church that they might be sung to the Praise of him by whom they were dictated?

HAVING shown the full and unqualified recognition of the Book of Psalms by Christ and his Apostles, and the necessary inference from the reality of its inspiration, that every insinuation against the spirit, the language, or the tendency of the collection, is an insinuation dishonoring to the character of God, involving a charge of inconsistency against his word, and implicitly impeaching those who have already entered into the places in their father's house prepared for them, with a want of the due measure of Christian Charity, we proceed to the examination of the SECOND FACT bearing upon the important inquiry respecting the Psalmody of the Church of Christ,—that

The Psalms were given *to be sung* by the Members of the Church—the Worshippers of God.

The truth of this proposition appears from the titles given to them, and the manner in which they were used in the Jewish Church by divine appointment.

The Hebrew language has long since ceased to be spoken by a separate people, and that minute acquaintance with its structure is, we presume,

irrecoverably lost, which might enable us to distinguish between prose and verse from the quantity and arrangement of the syllables, as we can in the Greek and Latin and modern tongues. Several have attempted to reduce the Hebrew versification to certain rules; but it is generally considered that they have utterly failed. Josephus, however, unequivocally states that the Psalms were written in metre. When making mention of them and other poetical portions of Holy Writ, he speaks like a man to whom Hebrew versification, the distinction between verse and prose, and the distinction between one species of verse and another were perfectly familiar. His translator either thought or affects to think that Josephus rather spake in accommodation to the ideas of Greeks and Romans, than from any precise acquaintance with the metrical rythm of Hebrew poetry: perhaps for no better reason than the improbability of the author of the Jewish antiquities being in possession of a species of knowledge which is beyond the reach of the Philologists of later and more exalted days. For this very reason, De Wette, a German writer, expresses a doubt of the existence of a Hebrew metre, and adduces Michaelis as of the same opinion. "Were there," says he, "a Hebrew metre, I believe that the vestiges and proofs, if not the very laws of it might be discovered." Having given a narrative of the exodus from Egypt and the passage through the Red Sea, Josephus adds,--"Moses also composed a song unto God containing his praises in Hexameter

verse." B. 2. C. 16. S. 4. Again: with reference to the song which Moses is said to have written and taught to the children of Israel immediately before his decease, he says,—"After this he read to them a poetic song which was commosed in Hexameter verse; and left it to them in the Holy Book: it contained a prediction of what was to come to pass afterwards." B. 4. C. 8. S. 44. But, in particular respecting the Book of Psalms:—"And now David being freed from wars and dangers, and enjoying for the future a profound peace, composed Songs and Hymns to God of several sorts of metre: some of those which he made were trimeters, and some were pentameters: he also made instruments of music and taught the Levites to sing hymns to God, both on that called the Sabbath day and on other festivals." B. 7. C. 12. S. 3. Whatever may be the value attached to it, at all events the testimony of the Jewish historian is sufficiently perspicuous and pointed.

The names, however, appropriated to the collection, clearly indicate its character and use. The title *Psalms*, which is a Greek word introduced into the English language through the Latin medium, is derived from *Psallo*, to *sing*, and teaches us that the compositions distinguished by it were designed to be set to music. The Psalms of David are called also the "Songs of the Lord," and the "Songs of Zion." "So the number of them, which were brethren that were instructed in the Songs of the Lord, all that were cunning, was two hundred, four score and eight." (1 Chron. xxv. 7.) "There they that carried us

away captive required of us a *song:* and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, *sing* us one of the *songs* of Zion." (Ps. cxxxvii. 3.) These titles given to the collection, appear to point to its design,—its design according to the Spirit who dictated its different pieces.

That these Psalms were sung by the Old Testament Church, with divine approbation, in her solemn religious assemblies, hardly requires proof. It is evident that the Jews, who were carried away to Babylon, had been accustomed to sing them in their native land, from their pathetic exclamation, provoked by the demand, it may be of curiosity, it may be of insolence, to which reference has already been made. "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land!" The days of mirth and festivity, which they spent together at Jerusalem, when the assembled tribes feasted and sung together before the Lord, and tuned their harps to his praise, had passed away. Sorrow and sighing and tears had succeeded. They are in the midst of strangers, who had sacked their beloved city, defaced and plundered, and finally laid in ruins their boasted temple, slain their nobles, made their king a captive, put into their hands the cup of poverty, of affliction and of slavery. Their hearts are no longer open to receive pleasure from the joy-inspiring song and the accompanying tones of the well tuned instrument. The full swell of the gladdening sounds would only have increased their bitterness of spirit, from its association with the repose and happiness of days now gone. Their harps so frequently in requisition, before the invader had

entered in among them, are suspended upon the willows by the brink of the river of Babylon, and only utter the hollow sounds of melancholy moaning, as their chords vibrate in the breeze.

It would seem from the history of the children of Israel, that the arrangements for singing the praises of God were brought to a greater degree of perfection, by the instrumentality of David, who contributed so largely, by the Holy Spirit, to the songs of Zion, as to acquire the honorable appellation of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, and to give his name to the Book of Psalms. The number of those who were appointed by the King to the service of God in the celebration of praise, vocally and by instruments, including Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman, who presided, was two hundred and eighty-eight, whom he divided into twenty-four orders or classes, and who had their places assigned to them by lot. They used the songs which form *part* of the present collection. The book was not completed till long after the days of David. On the very solemn and joyful occasion of the removal of the ark from the house of Obed-edom, to the tent which David had erected for its reception, certain of the Levites were appointed to precede the ark, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel: and the king put into the hand of Asaph, who was their chief, and of his brethren, a Psalm to be sung by them, which is contained in the sixteenth chapter of the first book of Chronicles. The verses beginning with the eighth and ending with the twenty-second constitute the first fifteen verses of the one hundred and fifth Psalm;

those beginning with the twenty-third and ending with the thirty-third constitute the ninety-sixth Psalm; the thirty-fourth verse of the chapter is the same with the first of the one hundred and sixth Psalm, and the thirty-fifth and sixth form the concluding two verses of the same, a few verbal variations excepted. We know for what purpose this song was written: we know that it constitutes part of a collection of songs, to which the head of the church has given his unqualified sanction. The conclusion is by no means difficult. The purpose for which it was given determines the design of the Spirit in the collection of songs with which it is numbered. In the absence of all opposing testimony, it appears that the songs of Zion, forming the Book of Psalms, were given by the Spirit to be sung by the church, and were sung.

But there is another Psalm written upon a particular occasion concerning which we are informed, and which we mention for a reason that shall appear presently. The Psalm which David spake unto the Lord, in the day when the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies and out the hand of Saul, and which is found in the second book of Samuel, is the eighteenth of the sacred collection of Songs.

There is a passage in the second book of Chronicles (xxix. 25, 26, 30,) which casts much light upon the divinely authorized practice of the people of Israel, in relation to the Psalmody which they used in the worship of God. During the reigns of the kings who preceded Hezekiah,

the Israelites had corrupted themselves exceedingly. Their kings encouraging them by their example, they worshipped the Gods of the nations. The temple was spoiled and shut up by Ahaz, while he multiplied altars to strange deities. When Hezekiah ascended the throne of his ancestors, he set his heart upon the restoration of the purity of divine service. The Temple is once more opened, and sanctified at his injunction, with all its sacred furniture. The rulers of the city, being called together, offer sacrifice for their own sins and the sins of the kingdom. The king "set the Levites in the house of the Lord with symbals, with psalteries and with harps, according to the command of David and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets." And while the burnt offering was being consumed upon the altar, all the congregation worshipped, and singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded. "Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord, with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness and they bowed their heads and worshipped." By these verses are taught the three following particulars:—(1) that it was part of the worship of God's house to sing praise, (2) that what David did in ordering the public service, and appointing proper persons, instructed in the songs of the Lord, to sing praise, was by the command of the Lord, and not his own will or his own wisdom, and (3) that the words of David and Asaph or the words of inspired

men were used. The manner, therefore, in which the words of David and of Asaph were used in the worship of God, every part of whose service is prescribed by himself, is a proof of the design of the spirit in moving them to write. The spirit moved them to write songs, and commanded the people to sing their words.

The celebration of praise according to the order sanctioned by Him to whom praise is to be ascribed, which was necessarily suspended during the melancholy period of the Babylonish captivity, was afterwards restored in due form by Nehemiah. The chief of the Levites, with their brethren, are appointed to their proper place "to praise and to give thanks according to the commandment of David the man of God. And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication both with thanksgiving and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries and with harps." (Neh. xii. 24, 27.)

There is a circumstance which is deserving of particular attention, as it appears to teach, that the Psalms, which, in a collective form, constitute a portion of divine revelation, were not only designed to supply the matter of the church's praise under the Jewish dispensation, but embrace all that God dictated for that purpose. Several Songs composed on particular occasions, and there is no reason to suppose not dictated by the Holy Spirit, have no place assigned to them in the Book of Psalms. Such are the Songs of Moses, composed when the Israelites had passed through the Red Sea, and immediately before

his removal from their head; David's pathetic lamentations over Saul and Jonathan; the Song of Deborah and Barak after the defeat of Sisera; the Song of Hannah when she came to present her son Samuel before the Lord at Shiloh; the song of Hezekiah after his recovery from his sickness, with several others. Be it remembered that the collection of the Psalms into one Book must have been the work of inspiration no less than their composition, otherwise the Saviour never would have given them his sanction in their present form. Since of the Songs interspersed through the different parts of the Old Testament, some are inserted into the Book of Psalms and several are passed by, it naturally occurs to ask what the ground of distinction is, between them which have been omitted, and such as have been incorporated with the Songs of Zion. This question can only be solved by a determination of the particular purpose for which the collection of inspired songs was made. If we suppose the collection made with the view of setting before the church the Psalms that should be used in the celebration of praise, it becomes easy to determine why some Psalms found already written in the Book of God are inserted and others are not inserted: a circumstance which we could not explain in a satisfactory manner upon any other supposition.

The design for which certain Psalms have been collected into one volume was not to *preserve*, for the use of the church, *all the songs* composed by holy men of God moved by the Holy Ghost. In that case, there would have

been no necessity for inserting any Psalm which had already found a place in the inspired record. The introduction of such must be considered a very unprofitable repetition. But, as we have already observed, the eighteenth Psalm is to be found in the second book of Samuel, the ninety-sixth, part of the hundred and fifth, and a few verses of the hundred and sixth are to be found in the second Book of Chronicles.

The design was not *to bring together the detached productions of one inspired penman.* The Psalms are the productions of various writers, from the days of Moses, to whom the ninetieth Psalm is generally ascribed, till the time of Ezra, subsequent to the return from Babylon.

The design was not *to furnish one complete view of inspired songs.* Then there would not have been the omissions to which I have before referred.

There remains only one other supposition of which I am aware,—that the church might be furnished with such a collection as contained the Psalms designed for regular and standing use, in her public and social services; and that the error might be prevented either of inadvertently introducing some, though inspired, not intended for general and standing use, or of omitting some designed for social worship and adapted to that end. The admission of a song into the scripture may infer its inspiration; but its admission into the Book of Psalms, proves at once its inspiration and adaptation, according to the spirit, to the services of the sanctuary: the exclusion of one from the general collection, whilst it does not invalidate

its claim to inspiration, seems to show that its use *as a song* was private and temporary.

But perhaps more than enough has been said to prove that the Book of Psalms was written, with the intention of being sung by the church to the praise of him by whom they were indited. Is it then too much to infer that an *inspired* collection of Psalms or Hymns was necessary: that the wisdom of man was not adequate to the task of producing such songs, as might be sung without fear in the presence of a holy and a jealous God:—that the important work of writing for the church in her holy exercises of praise, could not be entrusted even to the new creature, so long as the law in the members is warring against the law in the mind, and leading into captivity to the law of sin and death:—and that therefore God has perfected, having expressly required his people to sing praise, that which was too great for weak men, too sacred that it should be exposed to the impress of an unclean hand?

A heathen Poet, writing respecting the machinery and composition of dramatic works, lays down this very judicious rule:—

> "Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
> Inciderit."————————————

"Let not a God be introduced, unless a crisis shall have arrived which is worthy of his interference." In other words: A God should never be brought forward, when there is not something to be performed which man is unable to acccomplish. The idea expressed by a man brought up in ignorance of the lively oracles of God, addicted to the idolatries of Rome, and of a licentious

character, might cause many a professed christian to blush for his irreverent stupidity in supposing that God has stepped forward in any instance, unnecessarily to dictate what might very well have been dispensed with, or when man in the exercise of his own wisdom could have supplied the desideratum. The man whose correct judgment would prohibit the introduction of the Deity upon the stage, when his interposition was not absolutely necessary, would at once conclude, when sufficient evidence is produced of the presence of God, that a crisis had approached when his presence was wanted: that some work was to be executed beyond the resources of human agency.

Creative power belongs to God alone. Let us enquire under what circumstances it has been exerted. In six days God created the Heavens and the Earth, commanded the light to shine, arranged the materials which compose the sublunary world, spake into existence the herb yielding seed and the fruit-tree bearing fruit, beasts of every name, fish of every species, and birds of every wing. In the production of man, male and female, his glorious works were completed. When these things were brought into existence, there had been no provision made for their production independently of an immediate exertion of divine power. It is otherwise now, and has been otherwise since God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. The machinery of creation has been put in motion in all its departments; and according to general laws, there is ample provision made for the perpetuity by reproduc-

tion of every thing to which God gave existence at the beginning, without an immediate manifestation of power. Has God since the creation of man, at any time displayed his creative power by an immediate act? has he restored any lost herb, or multiplied by his efficacious word, any valuable species of fruit-tree, producing new stocks where none grew before or where seeds had not been shed? has he given to man any new species of inferior animal, in addition to those formed at first? Nothing of the kind. It was not—it is not necessary. His power and his wisdom are amply displayed in the things existing, and in their perpetuation, each of its own species, from internal resources bestowed in creation, combined with the operation of external influences. As if he would teach us how alien from his consistent character, is an immediate exertion of power or display of wisdom in any case, in which through ordinary means the prevention is possible; he seems (to speak of our God after the manner of men) carefully to anticipate and to prevent the recurrence of the necessity of immediate operation. Witness his providence, when about to send a deluge of water upon the earth, to punish man for abounding wickedness. He directs Noah to construct an ark for the salvation of his house, at the same time sufficiently capacious to contain the seed of every creature liable to destruction by the flood, and leads of every beast and of every fowl at least one pair, in due season, into that one place of safety. And when the seed of all terrestrial things destructible by water had been collected into the ark, God, that every thing

as if under his own seal might be perfectly safe, shut the architect in, with his house, with the inferior animal, beast and fowl.

Observe again how the same rule—an immediate exertion of divine power when divine power immediately exerted is necessary and only then—is observed by the Son of God, when he sojourned, in the form of a servant, among men. Two examples are sufficient of a rigid adherence to the rule. A father brought his son to him, who from a child had been under the power of a deaf and dumb spirit, that the Saviour might set him free. The spirit at the command of the Son of God "came out of him;" but left him lying along like one dead, so that some of the spectators thought he was dead. Did Jesus command him to rise? No: created agency can do the rest. He put forth his hand and lifted him up. A case even more perspicuous is furnished in the history of Lazarus' resurrection from the dead. The dead man had been in the grave now four days. "It was a cave and a stone lay upon it." There are three things to be done:—(1) the stone is to be taken away from the mouth of the cave, (2) Lazarus is to be reanimated, and (3) his bandages are to be loosed. The Lord might have spoken the word. The stone would have rolled aside, and the man, even now dead, would have come forth free. But the power of God may not be immediately exerted, when created power is equal to the work to be executed. Man can roll away the stone. Man can loose the grave clothes in which a corpse is wrapped. God alone can reanimate the lifeless clay. Therefore the Saviour re-

serves that part of the work alone for himself, in which human intervention would be vain. "Take ye away the stone," says he to them that stand by, "Lazarus come forth" is the word of power which the dead hears. "Loose him and let him go," he again addresses the spectators, when divine power immediately put forth is no longer wanted.

Has God deviated from the same law of operation, in giving a special revelation of himself to man? Have holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, put upon record any thing which we might have known without an inspired revelation? Has God communicated what man might have discovered by patient and impartial investigation? God has furnished us with many signal predictions of future events, some of which have been remarkably fulfilled, of others we confidently await the accomplishment. Can man penetrate "the veil that conceals from our eyes the events of future years?" Can he see what lies behind it, except God be pleased to draw it aside, and allow him a partial glance? God has revealed the appointment of a Saviour. Could man have certainly discovered that such an appointment had been made? God has set forth the personal and official character of the Saviour, the principles of the New Covenant, and the method by which the designs of God in making that Covenant should be carried into effect. Could man, who was unable to ascertain the existence of a New Covenant, and the appointment of a Mediator, have made any approach to the detection of its provisions or of his qualifications and work? God has supplied us with a histori-

cal narrative of events occurring in successive generations, from the creation of the world till the carrying away to Babylon,—from the incarnation of his Son till the imprisonment of Paul in Rome, events preparatory to the appearance of Christ, subservient to the accomplishment of the plan of redemption, and illustrative of the principles of his providential administration, the stability of his purpose, and the irresistibility of his power. These events transpired before the face of man. But would he have ever discovered their relation to the incarnation of Christ and the salvation of sinners, without a revelation from Heaven? As there can be but one answer given to the preceding questions, with others which might be formed upon all the parts of revelation, that answer is left with the reader. Moreover those events which are more intimately connected with the development of the purposes of God, and the principles of his administration in regard to man, and which God has caused to be written for our learning, are of a character so little imposing that they attracted very limited attention in passing, and were likely to sink into oblivion with the men who witnessed them; nay, but for the providence of God would have been entirely overlooked and forgotten. Has any pen but that of inspiration recorded the events which are primarily set forth in the word of God? not one. Had God not put it upon record, the history of the formation of all things, of the deluge, of Abraham, the patriarchs, the Israelites, borne down upon the wheel of time, must have remained entirely concealed from the view of future ages, till it had performed its en-

tire revolution. In an age affording every facility for the registry of passing occurrences, the allusions in profane writers to the appearance, the character, and the acts of Jesus of Nazareth are so few and imperfect that we are left to conjecture every thing without knowing any thing.

Finally. The Son of God only interferes in behalf of man when every other refuge fails. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending forth his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

One principle then seems beyond controversy, that God in no case interferes by immediate operation, except when the agency of the creature is utterly insufficient; and of course that his immediate interposition proves the insufficiency of man. His dictation by his spirit of a collection of songs, to be used in his public service consequently proves that man, not inspired, was not at all qualified to supply this desideratum in the church. The argument may be stated thus:—God never immediately appears when the agency of the creature is adequate. But God has given to his church by the immediate influence of his spirit the Book of Psalms to be used in the celebration of his praise. Therefore man, not immediately directed by the spirit, was inadequate to the composition of such a Book for such a purpose.

Psalms suited to the exigencies of the church of God, must be adapted to the diversified circumstances of all ages and of all nations,—to the almost endlessly modified states of individuals,

They should be divested of every thing national, occasional, and temporary, partaking of the character of the whole word of God, which is equally adapted to the spiritual wants of every nation, of every generation, and of every stage of the divine life. The church of God is one. Believers, to whatever nation they belong, in whatever age they have lived or may live are members of one body, partakers of one spirit, servants of one Lord, the subjects of one faith, engaged in one warfare, and the heirs of one inheritance. The songs therefore which are adapted to one nation or one age, and which cannot be introduced into a strange land, or may become antiquated, are plainly not adapted to the church of God, which is of no nation, and yet of every nation, of no age, and yet of every age. Reason then teaches the necessity of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in order to the composition of songs, in which all the requisites of a Psalmody for the church meet. No man, however enlarged in the sphere of his religious knowledge, however diversified his religious experience, may hope to comprehend the different aspects which vice assumes, the different states of every believer's soul, the various vicissitudes of the christian warfare, and the multiplied sources of the christian's strength, perseverance and joy. Let experience bear witness. There is no end to the alterations and improvements of uninspired songs, which a change of circumstances renders imperative—There is still found something defective, something suspicious if not objectionable, something at one time appropriate now obsolete, which should be perfected, improv-

ed or expunged. That short of a collection of songs by Him, whose works partake of the perfection of his own character, who knows the end from the beginning, who knows what is in man by nature, what by grace, from whom no one of man's trials, fears, hopes, joys, triumphs, and prospects are hid, there is no end to the composition of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; that ever and anon a new collection or a new arrangement of an old collection claims our attention, which promises to avoid the errors and to remedy the defects of its predecessors; that yet there is not found, after all that has been promised and done one work which shall shut the mouths of gainsayers, present no sufficient handle upon which an objector shall lay hold, may reasonably be expected to maintain its place; that every collection will be found to bear the stamp of that baneful offspring of carnality—PARTY, and having a tendency to perpetuate that blotch upon the fair face of Christendom, at once argue the work of writing hymns for the use of the church in her religious services too great for human wisdom, and the necessity of divine interposition to supply what man has vainly hoped to furnish.

The necessity of an inspired collection of Psalms, may be further argued from the peculiarly dangerous tendency of error, in the songs of the Church. Poetry and song have ever been the most successful formers of the public mind. They are much better suited to give particular tone to public sentiment, than all arguments. Like a well-formed and smiling countenance, which prepossesses us so suddenly, and so forci-

bly in favor of the person, that we pity and forgive known vices, and are willing to believe that he possesses rare and decided virtues, of the existence of which we have not, nor wait to obtain substantial evidence. Poetry and music lay immediate and close siege to our feelings, which, if they do not surrender at first assault, usually give an easy victory; and the understanding is taken by surprise without having been warned, or having time to prepare against the inundation, perhaps of error, perhaps of vice, which the assailants introduce in their train. It too often happens through a prejudice in favor of the garb in which they are clothed, that truth is received without examination, error without question, virtue without approbation, and vice without an opposing struggle. The fact appears to have been well understood in ancient and more modern times, that poetry, especially when set to music, is the most happy and expeditious road, by which to approach and gain the public mind, and direct its bent at pleasure; and without particular enquiry into the cause of its power, has often been triumphantly improved. It was no wild and groundless notion, but an idea derived from an intimate acquaintance with human nature and accurate observation that led one to say, "Let me be exclusive balladmaker for a nation and I care not who are its legislators." And doubtless with that advantage he could easily defeat the wisest measures, excite opposition to the most salutary laws, and promote insurrection against the most upright rulers.

With what solicitude should we therefore guard against the introduction of songs into the service

of the church, in which there may possibly be an error contrary to the doctrines of the Gospel of Christ. Every error which has found its way into the Hymns or Psalms used by the worshippers of God, has obtained a passport to the understanding and the heart which no ministry however pure can destroy. The Gospel Minister who gives his countenance to a Psalm or song embracing error, puts into the hands of the enemy a tried weapon with which to fight against the gospel which he preaches. Let us therefore, with one heart resolve, and with one voice proclaim our determination, to have no other songs than those which sustain the character of the Songs of the Lord, in which, being the very word of God, we are sure there can be no error.

CHAPTER III.

Has a second collection of Songs for the use of the Church been given by inspiration?

From what has been advanced in the preceding chapters, it appears that to the introduction of the Book of Psalms into the church, to be used in the celebration of praise, no objection can be brought forward from their matter, which does not amount to a denial of their inspiration; that their structure and the use to which they were applied, with divine approbation, in the Israelitish Church, prove that they were given for the special purpose of praise, and infer the necessity of an inspired collection of Songs. A third fact now claims our attention.

No subsequent Book or Books have been written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost of the same form and for the same use.

Of all the facts from which we argue for the standing use, in the Church, of the Book of Psalms, this is certainly the most obvious, needs the least proof, needs only to be stated to be admitted by all who are able to distinguish between the word of God and an exposition of that word; and yet it is probably the one to which many professors would be ready most ardently to put in their negative: and in the examination of which we shall be led necessarily into a more protracted discussion.

Only one collection of inspired songs was put into the hands of the Israelites, and they constitute an integral part of the Old Testament. The New Testament which we have the happiness to possess, is understood to be complete. Its parts are various; historical, doctrinal and argumentative, practical or perceptive and prophetical; but it contains no collection of songs, no one portion written in a metrical form, or presenting a shadow of internal evidence that the Holy Spirit, in dictating it, designed that it should constitute the matter of the church's praise. If Christ, or his Apostles by the Spirit, pronounced or wrote Psalms or Hymns or Spiritual Songs, God, in his providence has been less careful of them than of other inspired compositions. The ancient collection has come down entire; but one fragment of such poetical compositions has not been preserved to tell that they once had an existence. Granting that the Apostles wrote Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, it does not follow that they were dictated by the Spirit, and intended to constitute a rule of faith and practice, or any part of such rule. Even those whom God honored to be his penmen, may have written without the immediate direction of the Spirit the result of their own studies and investigations; and it is an evidence of that care with which God has watched over the purity of his own word, that no part of such writings has survived. A very natural prejudice in favor of an inspired writer of a portion of revelation, might have seduced man into an undue attachment to every thing proceeding from his pen, counteracted perhaps the progress of

sound knowledge, and promoted the cause of error. It is well known to every one who is an attentive observer of the influence of association upon the determination of the human mind, that error is never so insinuating and successful, as when combined with the principles of eternal truth; that the error, which is supported by the friend whom we love, is viewed with less disgust or received without inquiry: and that the heart is predisposed to give to that man, whose clear, consistent and correct views upon one subject, have contributed to the stock of our knowledge and expedited our progress in the investigation and acquisition of truth, credit for equal perspicacity and correctness in every department of study. We begin by attaching him to us, in the character of a useful ally, and are, if not maintaining a rigorous watch over the movements of our minds, insensibly led to sit down at his feet and put ourselves in the situation of scholars. The influence of a name associated with inspiration must be inconceivably greater than that of either the personal friend, or the man of approved judgment. We can reason now very calmly upon the possibility of Isaiah or Jeremiah having written upon subjects foreign to those of revelation, or only incidentally bearing upon them, and having produced nothing worthy of more attention than the pages of Newton or of Pollok; but did their uninspired writings exist, it is probable the case would be so far altered, that we should find the disjunction of what is and is not inspired, the union of profound submission to the words of the spirit by them, and an im-

partial examination of their own words, requiring an effort beyond the power of man. But God has not furnished an occasion for so severe a trial of man's strength. He has considered, in condescension, our frame, he has pitied our weakness, and put an absolute termination to any thing which the inspired writers may have committed to paper, when not moved by the Holy Ghost.

The Old Testament contains references to sundry books which are not now extant in a separate form; the Books of the wars of the Lord,—of Jasher,—of Nathan,—of Shemaiah the prophet,—of Jehu the son of Hanani. Solomon also wrote many songs, and a work, as it would seem, upon natural history. We read that "his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the Hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." We know then that such books existed, but the allusion to them in the sacred volume no more proves them to have been written by inspiration, than the allusion, in the Book of Esther, to "the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia," proves that it was written by the Holy Ghost. And even if we suppose a part of them to have been the work of inspiration, there are two circumstances which show that it was not designed for standing use in the church,—that it did not constitute a portion of the scriptures which were written for our learning.—(1) They are lost in the most absolute sense of the word, and (2) upon the part

of our Lord and his Apostles there is no appeal to one of them. The Old Testament is quoted as unquestionable authority, and there is not a single insinuation that it is in any part defective. Nay it is pronounced complete—"able to make wise unto salvation,—profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect*, *thoroughly* furnished unto *all* good works."

If we had the most conclusive evidence that the Evangelists and Apostles wrote a thousand and five songs, it still remains to be proved that they were written by inspiration; if we had the most conclusive evidence that they were written by inspiration, it still remains to be proved that they were adapted to permanent and general use among christians; if it were proved that they were adapted, they have no longer an existence, and the spirit of Christ alone, by an immediate communication, can supply their place.

There is however no evidence that Christ or his Apostles committed any thing to writing which has been lost, wrote any songs for the use of the church additional to the Jewish collection or designed to supersede its use in the worship of God. Christ makes no reference to such poetical compositions. "The hymn which our Saviour sung with his disciples at the conclusion of the last supper, is generally supposed to have consisted of the Psalms that are contained between the one hundred and thirteenth and the one hundred and eighteenth inclusive. This was called by the Jews the great *Hallel* or *Hymn*, and was usually sung by them at the celebration of the Passover." (Gray's

Key, 219.) The Apostles no where allude to any other than the Old Testament collection of songs. "Is any merry?" says James, "let him sing psalms." It is to be hoped that before any expositor shall presume to say that James refers to other psalms than those of David, he will take the trouble of proving that, at that time other Psalms existed. The exhortation is certainly both intelligible and appropriate, supposing those to whom he wrote knew of no other than the Psalms of David. Many a glad heart has opened the Book and sung them, and found its gladness promoted by the exercise.

An appeal to the words of Paul in support either of the existence and use of hymns and spiritual songs distinct from the Psalms of David, or of the propriety of introducing them into the sanctuary would not be deserving of a reply, were it not calculated to make an impression upon the mind which has never been exercised in the examination of the subject, and is warped by the prevailing practice of various worshipping societies. "Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. iii. 16.) "Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and Hymns and spiritual Songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. v. 19.) The terms employed to designate the matter of praise are in the original as in the translation, in both epistles, the same. Why may not all these terms apply to the Songs of Zion? The words of the Apostle by no means imply the existence, when he wrote in the churches of

Ephesus and Collosse, of hymns and spiritual songs not comprehended in the Book of Psalms. To the whole collection the title "Psalms" is appropriated by Christ and his Apostles. The Hebrew word *Tehillim*, by which also it is distinguished, is more correctly translated "*Hymns.*" And from the character of the book, every one must at once perceive with what propriety it may be entitled "Spiritual Songs." Brown, in his dictionary, under the word Psalm, thus writes,—"When Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs are mentioned together, Psalms may denote such as were sung on instruments; Hymns such as contain only matter of praise; and Spiritual Songs such as contain doctrines, history, and prophecy for men's instruction." The distinction is deduced from the original names applied to different divine poems, and is sanctioned by the general voice of expositors. There is no reason, however, constraining us to adopt the opinion that there are, in the inspired collection, pieces to which one or other of these denominations must be exclusively applied. The particular view of the character of one of the songs of the Lord, which we take, may lead us to apply to it one denomination in preference to another. If we would mark that particular feature of its character present to our mind, it may be necessary to make choice of one rather than another of the three designations used with reference to inspired poetical compositions, but I apprehend there is no one part of the collection to which the title *Psalms* so exclusively belongs, that it may not be called *Hymns* or *Spiritual Songs;* no part to

which the title *Hymns* belongs so exclusively, that it may not be called *Psalms* or *Spiritual Songs;* no part to which the title *Spiritual Songs* belongs so exclusively that it may not be called *Psalms* or *Hymns.* The Songs of Zion will be called by all these names mentioned by the Apostles, according to the light in which they are viewed. They are all Psalms, as having been occasionally sung accompanied by instrumental music. They are all Hymns, because composed in honor of the Supreme Being. They are all Spiritual Songs, because poetical and composed by the direction of the Spirit. According then as the mode in which they were occasionally sung, their matter, or their structure and divine origin, are taken into consideration, the poetical pieces, found collected in the Old Testament, will be called Psalms or Hymns or Spiritual Songs.

There is nothing more common among men, there is nothing more common in scripture, than to call the same thing by different names, according to the view which is taken of its character and use. The Old and New Testaments are called also the Word of God, the Scriptures, the lively oracles of God. The ministers of Christ are also called Ambassadors, Bishops, Stewards, Elders, Pastors, Teachers, Shepherds. The writer of the 119th Psalm calls the scriptures, to which he had access, the Law of the Lord, his testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, word. Because we more frequently apply the term *scripture* to denote the revelation which God has made to man, who would from

that conclude that the *word of God*, and the lively *oracles of God* are books distinct from the *Scripture?* Because we almost exclusively apply the term *Ministers* to point out those who are set apart to declare the counsel of God, and to administer the ordinances of God's House, who would conclude that *Ambassadors* of Christ, *Bishops*, *Elders*, *Pastors*, *&c.*, are orders of men distinct from the *ministers* of reconciliation and from one another? Because the Saviour has adopted the style of the Jew and used the term *law* to denote the Pentateuch, who would conclude that the *testimonies* of God, his *precepts*, *judgments*, *word*, are works totally distinct from the Books of Moses? There is just one class of men capable of drawing such a conclusion:—those who can infer from the phraseology which Paul employs in the epistles to the Ephesians and Collossians, that Hymns and Spiritual Songs must be different from the Psalms of David.

If to the preceding reasoning, it should be objected, that though different names are appropriated in scripture to the same object, we do not find an enumeration of those names, at the same time, and in the same connection, in order to exhibit it in different points of view, the answer is plain, the objection is not founded in fact. We do find in the word of God, a variety of terms employed to point out the same thing in its various aspects, in the same manner that the Apostle applies the terms *Psalms*, *Hymns* and *Spiritual Songs* to denote one collection of inspired odes under different views. When David says, (1

Chron. xxix. 19.) "Give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy *commandments*, thy *testimonies*, and thy *statutes*," how shall we explain the commandments of the Lord, that the matter of them and the form of them may appear distinct from the matter and form of the testimonies and statutes? Is there a man who will take up the Pentateuch, the Books of Joshua, of Judges, and of Samuel, and show us what are the testimonies of God as they are distinguished from the commandments? and the statutes as they are distinguished from both? Is there a man who can show that either with respect to their matter or their form, they are not identical? —"Let a man so account of us," says Paul, (1 Cor. iv. 1) "as of the *ministers* of Christ and *stewards* of the mysteries of God." Were the Apostles divided into two classes? Was one class called *ministers?* the other *stewards?* or have we not here two views of the same character? "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, *supplications*, *prayers*, *intercessions*, and giving of thanks be made for all men." (1 Tim. ii. 1.) Here there is obviously a multiplication of terms to exhibit different views of the same exercise. I should like to be informed how a man can pray without making supplication and intercession; how intercede without making prayer and supplication. Till I have been taught this curious lesson, I must be excused for thinking that Christians may fulfil the Apostolic injunction, "and sing with grace, in Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs," who always use the Psalms of David.

Perhaps some may think that an easier explanation of the Apostle's phraseology is found in the titles prefixed to the greater part of the Psalms in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, from which he quotes frequently, even when the reading differs from the received Hebrew text, and which would naturally be put into the hands of the primitive Christians speaking the Greek language. If so, I do not object. The reason why an immediate reference was not made to those titles is, that they are considered by many of doubtful authority, and to some of the psalms no titles are prefixed. It is true, however, that the titles given to the psalms answer to the terms employed by Paul to designate the poetical compositions which he requires the churches of Ephesus and Collosse to use in the celebration of praise. We find one entitled *Psalmos*, (Psalm) another *Ode*, (Song) and another *Halleluiah*. The last title is made up of two Hebrew words, which signify "Praise ye the Lord," and identifies the poem to which it is prefixed with that of which the Greek term *Hymnos* (Hymn) is the proper specific title. Of the titled Psalms the greater number have the first of the three titles mentioned; twenty-seven have the second; and eighteen the third. Granting then that the appropriate Greek title of the eighteen Psalms of praise is *Hymnoi* (Hymns) Paul, by directing the churches to use Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs, points out to them the Book of Psalms according to the titles prefixed to most of them in the version which was best known of course, to all who spake the Greek language.

From what has been said, it must appear pretty evident that, whilst the New Testament supplies us with no songs for the use of the church, Christ and his Apostles are silent as to any known to them, and used under their direction, not included in the Psalms of David.

It is with extreme pain that I approach the subject of the inspiration of modern poetical publications written for the use of the church and introduced into her services. Is it possible that men, with the word of God in their hands, will contend for the inspiration of Newton or of Scott, of Doddrige or of Hart, of Watts or of Wesley? that they would put their writings, whether prosaic or poetical, upon a level with the Holy Scriptures? They *may have been* talented, learned, studious, well read in the Scriptures, and decidedly pious, but they were not *inspired*. Their works *may be* distinguished for purity of doctrine, and elegance of style, they may be excellent auxiliaries to the study of the word of God, but they are not *his word*. Is there one who does not perceive that the moment he admits the inspiration of their works, or the works of any one of them, he renounces all right to examine them, and to compare them with the Scriptures, to ascertain their correctness? He is forthwith bound to receive every statement without question, without reply.—They become his standard of truth and duty. We do not consider ourselves at liberty to inquire whether any thing contained in the word of God be true—be pure. Whatever is found there is considered true and pure of course —Why? *Because it is the word of God,—the*

Watts claims better than inspiration.

word of inspiration. Now all portions of inspired writing have equal authority. To question the correctness of any proposition of an inspired Book, is to question the truth of God — All who use the Hymns of Newton, of Watts, or of Wesley, and contend for the propriety of their introduction into the House of God, do not hold them inspired; they take quite different ground, not more tenable, though less impious. They have, however, been instrumental in introducing that indistinctness of apprehension upon the subject of inspiration which so generally prevails, and owe to a jealous God a fearful responsibility.

Some of our religious poets, and those whose works are most extensively used in the churches, claim little if any thing less than inspiration for themselves. One (Dr. Watts) says in his preface to his Hymns and Spiritual Songs,—"There are also in the Book of Psalms, many deficiencies of light and glory, which our Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles have supplied in the writings of the New Testament, and with this advantage, I have composed these spiritual songs which are now presented to the world. Nor is the attempt vainglorious or presuming; for in respect to clear evangelical knowledge, the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than all the Jewish prophets." Here there is plainly a confounding of that illumination which begins in the new birth, with inspiration. If the latter part of the statement mean any thing in relation to the composition of spiritual songs, it means that himself, though the least in the kingdom of God, being greater than

all the Jewish prophets, and of course than David, is better qualified than he was, to compose songs for standing use in the church, and implies either that the Psalmist, though the spirit spake by him, might err, or himself was raised above the possibility of error. The Apostles only desired to have their writings on the same ground with the prophets,—teaching us that the church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets,—but his compositions must occupy a higher place than the phophets. Another (John Wesley) says in his preface, "It is large enough to contain all the important truths of our holy religion, whether speculative or practical: yea to illustrate them all and to prove them all both by scripture and reason. *And this is done* in regular order." Again he adds, "May I be permitted to add a few words with respect to the poetry? Then I will speak to them who are judges thereof with all freedom and unreserve. To these I may say without offence: 1. In these hymns there is no doggerel: no botches: nothing put in to patch up the rhyme: no feeble expletives: 2. Here is nothing turgid or bombast, on the one hand, or low and creeping on the other: 3. There are no cant expressions: no words without meaning.—Those who impute this to us know not what they say. We talk common sense both in prose and verse, and use no words but in a fixed and determinate meaning. 4. Here are (allow me to say) both the purity, the strength, and the elegance of the English language." Again, speaking of some who had reprinted some of the hymns, "I desire they would not attempt

to mend them, for they really are not able.—None of them is able to mend either the sense or the verse." Nothing more can be claimed for the writings of the Holy Ghost. There is neither error nor defect in the matter, and there is no defect in the form. The author of some of the hymns, and selector of the rest, has pronounced the book perfect, admitting of no improvement:—*more perfect than the Bible.* Be patient, Reader. I have not made a statement without thought. If I have thought incorrectly, point out the error. This collection contains not only the important, "but all the important truths of our most holy religion whether speculative or practical." Where are the unimportant truths of our holy religion to be found. Doctrines not taught in scripture are not doctrines of our holy religion at all, but unholy traditions of vain man. The unimportant truths of *our holy religion* must be in the Bible. If the character which the compiler has given of his "hymns" be just, in possession of it we would have no cause to regret the loss of the scriptures. It would form an excellent and adequate substitute, while the minds of the weak would be freed from the difficult exercise of separating between the important and the unimportant truths, and furnished with the proofs which reason supplies of the doctrines of religion, and which are wanting to him who has nothing but the word of God. Let it pass: There is neither error nor defect nor redundancy in the hymns of John Wesley!

The original and grand source of the error in holding modern poetical compositions to be in-

spired, is that to which we have already referred, and which is brought to view in the words quoted from the preface of Dr. Watts—the confounding of the very wide distinction between inspiration and regeneration, or its fruit, spiritual illumination. Many hold and boldly affirm, many more, who would not perhaps adventure the direct assertion, employ language which implies, that every man who is born again is inspired,—that the writing of a regenerated man are the words of inspiration. It is probable that the latter may not be fully aware how firm a hold such an opinion may have taken of their minds,—that it is an opinion of theirs at all, till they are put upon the necessity of reasoning from it as a principle granted, in vindication of the writings of a beloved author, and the use to which they are applied. We shall now attempt to point out the distinguishing characteristics of inspiration. This it is to be hoped will help to remove in part the vague ideas which may exist, respecting the comparative claims of inspired songs and the writings of modern poets.—But as this is a subject of great importance, to be approached with caution, and not to be lightly passed over, we shall devote a separate chapter to the investigation of it.

CHAPTER IV.

What are the Characteristics of Inspiration?

HAVE the Books of the Old and New Testaments been given by inspiration? This general question does not come before us in the present discussion. The answer is taken for granted according to the declaration of one of the penmen. We do not write in reply to the Deist, but to those who admit that the title *scripture* belongs to the writings of Apostles and prophets, and that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God." The inquiry upon which we have entered, leads to the examination of

The Characteristics of that inspiration to which the scriptures, and, of course, the Book of Psalms lays claim.

For information on this point, we appeal to the sacred writings themselves. If they do not furnish either a direct statement of the discriminating features of inspired writing, or principles from which a knowledge of its nature and properties may be legitimately deduced, it is useless to attempt the investigation of the subject. Conjecture would be presumptuous and vain, and knowledge beyond the limits of our research. We consider, however, that scripture has not left the subject of inspiration under any cloud of ob-

scurity. The following particulars are obviously presented to the view of him who reads with care the sacred volume.

1. The word of inspiration claims *God* for its *author*.

Is it historical? the selection, the arrangement, and the comments are God's. Is it doctrinal? the ideas, the reasonings, and the conclusions are God's. Is it practical? the precepts, exhortations, admonitions, warnings are God's. And in each department, the language is such as God was pleased to employ, to express what he would have revealed to man. Is it prophetical? the matter and words are of necessity God's. In short the scripture claims God for its author in as high a sense as if man's instrumentality had not been employed in its publication;—as if it had come to us by the hands of an angel, sent forth to distribute the volumes already written;—as if every part of it had been delivered in the same manner with the decalogue, graven upon tables of stone by the finger of God, after having been pronounced without the intervention of human instrumentality, in the ears of all the people.

The *Scripture* and the *word of God* are used as convertible terms: where the one is used the other may be used. "If he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the *scripture* cannot be broken." (Jno. x. 35.) "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel." (Rom. ix. 6.) The Apostle is here expressing his grief for the unbelief and approaching separation of his Jewish brethren,—by natural de-

scent, Israelites: and to prevent any misconception respecting the promises of God made to Israel, and registered in the scriptures, he states in the conclusion of the verse, and proves in the subsequent verses, that the appellation Israel, does not properly belong to all who are of the Israelitish nation, and that consequently the truth of the *Scripture promise*, or of the *Word of God*, is not effected by the taking away of the Kingdom of God from some who might inherit, according to natural descent the name Israel. When our Lord is called to answer for himself and his disciples, in neglecting the tradition of the elders, he replies, "Laying aside the *Commandment of God*, ye hold the tradition of men." And again, "making the *Word of God* of none effect, through your tradition." (Mark vii. 8, 13.)

What holy men of God spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost, is described as the *Word of God*. *The Word of God*, Samuel showed to Saul. "*The Word of the Lord* came to Nathan." "The *Word of God* came unto John in the wilderness," and it was the "*Word of God*" which Peter and John being filled with the Holy Ghost, spake with those of their own company whom they joined, after their deliverance out of the hands of the chief Priests.

That God is, in the strictest sense of the word, the *author* of the Decalogue, will be readily admitted. Now the Scripture generally is ascribed to God, not only in terms equally strong, but in the very same terms in which the ten commandments are ascribed to him. The fact that the matter and words are his, is the same, whether the

writing be executed by God immediately, or whether men be employed to perform the penmanship. Concerning the decalouge we read, "*God spake* all these words." (Exod. xx. 1.)—"And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." (Ex. xxxii. 15, 16.)

Let us now hear what terms are used with reference to other portions of Scripture—"*God, who* at sundry times, and in divers manners, *spake* in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets." (Heb. i. 1.) Communications were made to the fathers at sundry times, and in divers manners, and by different persons, but it was always God who *spake*. The prophets were the instruments by whom he caused his words to be heard. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he has visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of Salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as *he spake* by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began." (Luke i. 68, 70.) "Whom the Heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which *God hath spoken* by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began." (Acts iii. 21.) "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the *Holy Ghost*, by the mouth of David *spake*.—Well *spake the Holy Ghost* by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers." (Acts. i. 16, and xxviii. 25.)

"As the *Holy Ghost* saith, to-day if ye will hear his voice." (Heb. iii. 7.) How common the words, "Thus saith the Lord," by which the prophets introduce their addresses to the people! How striking the reproof which is directed against pretenders to inspiration who use their own tongues and say, "He saith." The prophets possess no higher character than organs by which God was pleased to address the people. Divine communications are clothed in language divinely imparted. Mark the singular language of John the Baptist when the "Jews sent Priests and Levites to ask him, who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed I am not the Christ. And they asked him what then? Art thou Elias? and he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? and he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the VOICE of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord."

The Apostles of the Lord occupied the same place with the prophets. They were merely the instruments by whom God chose to communicate his will—*to speak his word.* The commission which they received from the Son of God implies this. "Teaching them to observe all things, *whatsoever I commanded you.*" They must not, in the fulfilment of the important trust committed to them, depart from Jerusalem till the spirit descend upon them from above, to teach them all things, and to bring all things to their remembrance, that they had heard from the

Saviour while he was yet with them. They are not permitted to trust to the accuracy of their own judgment, nor to the strength of their own memory. The Apostles considered themselves so moved and directed that the words which they spake were of God, who put his Spirit within them. "When" says Paul to the Thessalonians, "ye received the *word of God which ye heard of us*, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the *word of God*, And to the Galatians: "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is *not after man.* For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by *the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Again to the Corinthians:—"Since ye seek a proof of *Christ speaking in me.*" Let us now hear Peter. "The *word of the Lord* endureth forever. And this is *the word* which by the Gospel is preached unto you." "This second epistle, I now write unto you;—that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour." In the latter verse he identifies himself and fellow Apostles with the holy prophets, in point of inspiration. Are the disciples to be mindful of the words of the prophets? So are they to be mindful of the words of Apostles. Does the word uttered by a prophet proceed from God? So does the word of an Apostle.

More might be added, were it necessary, to shew that the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments implies that their contents are just what God was pleased to communicate to us for

our instruction, that they are exhibited in that order which God was pleased to adopt, and that they are expressed in the words which God chose to employ.

But it will be said in reply, that we also read, —"*Moses spake* every precept to all the people according to the law."—"The law was given by Moses."—"*David calls* Messiah Lord." True: but Moses spake by the commandment of the Lord, and David was *in the Spirit* when he speaks of Messiah. That "*Isaiah* said, He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart." True: but it is also said that the *Holy Ghost spake* this same word *by Isaiah* the prophet unto their fathers. That the *Apostles spake* with tongues. True: but they spake *as the Spirit gave them utterance. Holy men* of God *spake*, being *moved by the Holy Ghost.* Consequently, the time when they spake, the words they uttered, and the ideas they communicated, were of the Spirit.

All the parts of Scripture are ascribed to the inspired writers as *intelligent* instruments. The words of Moses, the words of David, the words of Jeremiah are expressions, no less freely used than the word of God and the word of the Spirit. It is not supposed that, because men spake or wrote nothing but the words of God, they were irrational and involuntary, in speaking and writing. We cannot tell how God puts any of the means or instruments whom he employs into motion, for the accomplishment of his purposes; one thing, however, we know, that he employs them all, except in very few instances, according to their proper nature. He has never spoken by man, as

man speaks by a trumpet, inanimate and passive. Every part of his works, in earth and air, and sea, is subject to his control, and may be employed to do his work. Still every thing acts according to the laws, to which, in its production and preservation, it has been subjected by the Creator.

A guilty world is to be made desolate for the sins of them that dwell therein. The Lord gives his commission to the clouds of heaven. They gather like armies mustering for the battle, and pour down their streams upon terrified thousands. The fountains of the deep burst forth, and unite their waters with those descending from above, to swell the deluge to the overwhelming of a degenerate and impious generation. The Kings who fought against the allies of Israel must experience a defeat, too signal to be accomplished by the forces led on by Joshua; and God sends the hailstones down upon the retreating armies. He might have commanded them to execute his will, as balls discharged from the cannon's mouth, or stones projected from a sling, but this would have been contrary to the natural law of their movement. Hailstones naturally descend. They derive their impetus from the power of gravitation, and no force additional to that gathered in their descent is required to destroy those on whom they fall. When fiery serpents are sent in among the Israelites, they bite the guilty tribes. There needed no enchantment to allure them. "There came forth two she-bears from the wood and tare forty and two children, of them" that mocked Elisha the prophet, and whom he had cursed

in the name of the Lord. Were they not looking for their prey? Must we not suppose them led by instinct, prompted by hunger to make speed, allured, perhaps, by the shouts of youthful impiety, because God *sent them* to punish the children for their criminal amusement, and the parents for their neglect, in withholding an education in the fear of the Lord. It is natural for the rain and hail to fall, the serpent to bite, and the bear to rend; and when God makes them his instruments, they act according to their distinguishing properties and powers. When he employs man to execute his work, he brings him forward, upon the same principle, in the exercise of all his varied qualifications. Understanding, will, passions, affections are exerted agreeably to natural laws, and the relations which they sustain as different states of the same mind.

Ahab, King of Israel, goes up to Ramoth-Gilead, a doomed man; and in disguise. The King of Syria, with whom he fought, had commanded his soldiers to fight with none but the King of Israel; and he is hidden. But God will draw him forth, and find an instrument to accomplish his words. A certain man,—he knew not the King of Israel, less that God had intimated that he should die in the field of battle, or that he should fall by his hand,—drew a bow at a venture. No supernatural vigor is imparted to his arm, no supernatural agency diverts the arrow from its direct course, but it was pointed to the King, perhaps to the only part of his person not protected by armour, enters between the joints of the harness, and makes way for the life's blood. In the whole transaction, that certain man acted by no com-

pulsion, formed his resolution, executed his own will, shot at a venture: but either his purpose, his position, the direction of his arrow, with him altogether fortuitous, were precisely regulated by God of whom he was ignorant, or the prediction of him who knows the end from the beginning, was fulfilled by chance, and might never have been fulfilled. There is a very remarkable and conclusive example of the union of the efficient agency of God, with the freedom of the instrument by whom he acts, or of God's employing a human instrument, in the full, the free, and unconstrained exercise of all his faculties, in the case of Cyrus. God chooses Cyrus, Prince of Persia, to perform all his pleasure, even to the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple. God foretells what shall be accomplished by Cyrus, long before he had an existence, or the captivity had commenced from which he was to set Israel free. Here is a simple prediction. But God plainly informs us, that it is by his own agency it shall be accomplished, in the use of Cyrus' instrumentality. He will to the end contemplated, hold the right hand of his Shepherd, subdue nations before him, loose the loins of Kings, open the two-leaved gates, give him the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places. One thing must be evident, that the strength and perseverance of Cyrus, the subjection of nations to him, the terror of kings against whom he fights, the opening of the gates of Babylon to admit his army, the delivery into his hands of the accumulated treasures of the Assyrian capital, is the work of God. Till all these things were accomplished, Cyrus was ignorant of that God by whom he was direct-

ed and upheld. Lastly, in the accomplishment of the divine purpose, and in performing the work of God, all the parties, and Cyrus in particular, are regulated by principles congenial to their nature, education, habits and character. Cyrus manifests, from his youth, a predilection for a military life. To his personal gratification, with the consent of his grandfather the king of Persia, hardly obtained by the urgent application of the ambassadors from Media, he sets out with the command of the Persian forces, ordered to the assistance of the Medes, at war with the king of Babylon and his allies. After a series of victories in their progress, the united armies of Media and Persia, under Cyrus and his uncle Darius, sit down before the capital of Assyria. Despairing of being able to overturn or scale the walls of Babylon, the hope of entering the city upon the bed of the Euphrates, which ran through it, buoys up the youthful warrior. He cuts a canal, by which the waters of the river may be diverted from their course, that the channel within the city may be left dry. The night when the works were so far completed that they might attempt an entrance, was the same in which Belshazzar made a feast to his thousand lords, his queens, and his concubines, and drank wine out of the hallowed vessels of the Lord's house. The sight of the finger's of a man's hand, writing the sentence of death to his power, upon the wall opposite to which he sat, fills his mind with dread and his *loins are loosed.* It is probable that the lords, whose province it was to see the gates upon the river closed when night set in, were too much occupied in the revels of the feast to attend upon their duty. At all events,

the gates, which might still have presented a difficult obstacle to the entrance of the allied armies, *were not shut*, and Cyrus enters in to possess the *treasures of darkness*. In the historical narrative, we perceive nothing but the vigor, the ambition, the heroism, and the skill of the youthful warrior, inspiring his followers with valor, perseverance, and love of glory, on the one hand; on the other, the indolence and ease springing from a confidential reliance upon the fortifications of the city. In the prophecy, we see nothing but the agency of the Most High; and in the union of both, we are taught to contemplate the Sovereign of the world using human beings as his instruments, in the exercise of all their powers, and agreeably to the principles upon which their character has been formed.

Proceeding one step farther, the God of Heaven is seen employing rational and voluntary instruments, according to the almost endless variety of personal character. The word of inspiration presents before us a most beautiful illustration of this part of Jehovah's agency. The variety of mental structure, of intellectual power, of modes of thinking, and of style, presented in the word of God, so far from militating, as has been frequently supposed, against the plenary and verbal inspiration of the scripture, is only the necessary result of a principle of divine operation from which every deviation is miraculous, and furnishes a clear and ample elucidation of that principle. The concession, therefore, that the thoughts and style of the different portions of Holy Writ, are distinctive of different writers, of different degrees

of mental strength, and various modifications of mental operation, detracts nothing from the assertion of God's being the author of the whole, in the proper sense of authorship.

2. The word of inspiration claims absolute *freedom from error.*

God being the author of the Book, whatever is imputed to it, is imputed to him. Impute an error to the word of God, and you impute it to himself. But God cannot err, therefore whatever is written by inspiration must be free from error. Now inspiration is asserted of *all* scripture. This is the testimony which the scripture gives concerning itself, and if it be found a false witness in one particular, the testimony must be rejected in all. The Book which claims God for its author in every part, and is found to contain one false proposition, one unequivocal contradiction, must bear to have its claim denied. There is only one alternative to those to whom the scripture is presented. Let them choose between Deism, or the full admission of the truth of every proposition which the word of God contains. We must, however, always distinguish between the word of God and the principles which may have been deduced from it, which are often what the word does not warrant and shocking indeed.

3. The word of inspiration is free from *defect.* Imperfection is as foreign from the character of God as error. "God's law is perfect," says the Psalmist. The scriptures are fully adequate to the end contemplated by them. They are "able to make wise unto salvation,—profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished* unto *all good works.*" The word is free from defect, or the Apostle is found a false witness.

4. The word of inspiration contains nothing *superfluous.*

It is true there are portions of the word of God, the use of which, as of many tribes of living creatures, we are at present unable to discover. But is any man prepared to say that the purpose to which they are subservient, neither has been known, nor shall by the progress of events be developed to the view of the church? There would be more presumption than prudence and piety in the assertion, that any thing in the word of God must be superfluous because we cannot discover its use. A spiritual view of the character of God, and the reverence which that view must inspire, will lead us to the conclusion that as God never exerts immediately his power, when means are adequate to the proposed end, so he never puts forth his power either in the use or independently of means, when there is no object to secure. A plain testimony should outweigh a whole volume of speculations, and constrain us to plead ignorance in the presence of infinite wisdom. A plain testimony we have to the universal utility of the inspired record. "*All Scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable.*" And again, "*Whatsoever* things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope." Rom. xv. 4. *Paul* saw no portion of revelation superfluous—no part of the

Old Testament, in which the refinement of modern times has discovered much neither conducive to edification, consistent with delicate feeling, nor exhibiting the mild spirit of Christ. "*Whatsoever* things were written aforetime," whatever judgment, profanity, folly, or *affected* spirituality may form of them, "were written for our learning." He finds instruction in the minute record of the sins and sufferings of the Israelites in the wilderness. Some were idolators. "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. Some committed fornication, and fell in one day, three and twenty thousand." Some of them tempted Christ, and "were destroyed of serpents." Some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." What have we to do with all these things? The Apostle will inform us "All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor. x. 6–11.)

5. The word of Inspiration is *authoritative.*

That a work should be written upon any given scientific subject, or a history without an error, a defect, or a redundant expression, is not beyond the range of possibilities: yet would not men, supposing it written, be under an obligation to receive or to read it. The knowledge of its contents might not be necessary to the regeneration of man's character, or the purification of his life;—it might never contemplate such a result. The word of God is given for that end:—is subordinate to the reformation, and to the happiness of man, not only in this world, but in the future

state. The design for which it was written gives it a claim; and when its Author, who requires us to purify our hearts, to cleanse our hands, to be perfect, and its infallibility and perfection are considered in union with its design, it makes a demand upon our reception, which cannot be resisted without sin against God. To every man, to whom the word of God is presented, it proclaims, "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be condemned"—is condemned. Unfeigned faith, it must be evident to the unprejudiced and attentive reason, is something more than a mere historical belief of what is written, but it always implies a historical belief. No speculative unbeliever can be a faithful man, for the great object upon which faith terminates is brought to view by the word of God alone. The degree of saving faith will be measured by the extent to which the divine testimony is known and embraced; and therefore faith will be obstructed in its exercises and growth, by opposition to that testimony, in any the least particular. "All scripture is profitable." Therefore the advantage to be derived from it must fail, in so far as it is rejected. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." (Luke xxiv. 25.) They are not charged with a disbelief of all that the prophets had written, but with not believing it *all;*—not with total but partial disbelief. The consequences of their partial disbelief were, a suspension of the sanguine hopes they had fondly cherished, that Christ would redeem Israel,—"We *trusted* that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel"—and a with-

holding of credence from competent witnesses of the resurrection.—"But *him* they *saw not.*" Therefore the Saviour says, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think (are assured) ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."

Our assent is demanded to every part of Scripture alike. The inspiration which is asserted of all, is asserted of the several parts which constitute the whole. Whatever authority is derived from inspiration, belongs to every thing which is inspired. The Saviour has given his sanction to Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms; and should man refuse his assent to any part of Moses' writings, the Prophets, or the Psalms, he sets at nought the Saviour by whom the whole is sanctioned. What may appear little to man has the same high attestation with that which appears great. When God has not parcelled out his word, according to its supposed degrees of authority, importance and utility, for man to take a distinction of its parts, into more or less authoritative, important and useful, for granted is impious, taking it for granted, to attempt to make the division is vain.

It is rebellion against the authority which the words of inspiration claim, to bring an inspired statement to the test of reason, before it will be admitted, and only to receive it because reason has pronounced a decision in its favor. We must receive it without question, without examination, because God has spoken it. The Deity will not permit his creatures to debate with him. He proclaims a fact, and it must be admitted without hesitation; he issues a command, and it must be

obeyed; conceding the truth of the former and the justice of the latter, or the truth and authority of God are denied. If Revelation is to be subject to reason, it is unnecessary. If reason can decide upon the character of revealed facts, doctrines, precepts, they must be within the sphere of her investigations. But as revelation brings to view what man, in the exercise of reason, never could have discovered, reason cannot try the merit of the discoveries which have been made. These must be estimated according to the character of the author. In regard to revelation, reason's province is to ascertain the import of what is written;—her duty, if any of her supposed discoveries or deductions be found to clash with inspired statements, to give them up as imaginary and false, that every thought may be brought into subjection to the testimony of God.

Our final—our only appeal, for the determination of all controversies on the doctrinal or practical subjects of religion is to the Scriptures. They speak with authority. The reason, why many controversies in the church remain undecided is, probably, that there has not been a simple appeal to scripture: that men have been unwilling to have Revelation sit alone upon the judgment seat. They would associate another or others with her. She knows not to falter in deciding upon any case coming within her province; but obstacles are presented to the reception of her clear decisions, difficulties are raised, and her judgments are embarrassed by the delays, the opposition, and vacillation of those with whom she is unrighteously compelled to sit in judgment.

One appeals to revelation *and* tradition; another to revelation *and* the fathers; a third to scripture *and* reason; and a fourth sets revelation behind the scenes and will only permit us to hear her sentence as it is reported by the church. Her competency has also been brought into question, by folly urging her to decide in cases which should never have come before her tribunal. The authority however of scripture is not affected by the perverse proceedings of men. Its voice is still heard, amidst the tumult of contending partisans, proclaiming, "To the Law and to the Testimony."

The Saviour and his Apostles teach us, by examples, in what manner we should appeal to divine testimony. They bring forward the book and permit it to speak for itself. They never depart from the simple and obvious import of the words. They do not varnish them by explanations accommodated to the views designed to be exhibited. They take it for granted that they are intelligible, that they need only to be read to be understood by all who are not prepossessed. They do not dishonor God by acting as if they would say that he had given a revelation in which the words employed are not adapted to convey the ideas intended. The most profound submission to its authority appears in every appeal to scripture, by Christ and his Apostles. "Have ye not read that which was spoken to you of God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" He does not begin by explaining what is meant by being the God of Abraham, and then proceed to reason from the explanation. He at once fixes upon the lan-

guage employed—upon the use of the present tense, "*I am.*" According to the opinions of the Sadducees, to whom he replies, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob had ceased to exist, when the words cited by our Lord were uttered. But God cannot be the God of a nonentity. That Abraham lived to God, even when Moses was in Horeb, is therefore evident; and it implies the preservation and resurrection of the body an integral part of the man. The people felt the force of the argument at once, and the Sadducees are confounded. (Matt. xxii. 23–33.) "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are Gods?" Without waiting to show them why men, or what men are called Gods, he seizes upon the obvious fact, that those to whom the word of God came are so called, and reminds them that the scripture cannot be broken. (Jno. x. 31–36.) Jesus might have furnished an exposition quite as authoritative as the text; but when he appeals to the text, he must simply hear what it says, and according to a very useful rule, too much overlooked by some divines, judge of what it means by what it says. The same example is set before us by Apostles. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?—Nevertheless, what saith the scripture?" (Gal. iv. 21, 30.) "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son?—Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." (Heb. i. 5, 8.) Thus does he quote, without adding any comment for the purpose of giving a supposed fixedness, and determination to the language; even in cases where many might be ready to suppose an explanation

necessary to show the pertinence of the quotation, and infidelity has charged him with inconclusive reasoning, its perversity and blindness preventing it from discovering the bearing of the argument. Hear James. "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace: Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (iv. 5, 6.) And Peter. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. i. 15, 16.) Whenever Christ and his Apostles appeal to the scripture, they do it with the most implicit deference and submission, and teach us to consider its decision final.

CHAPTER V.

Have Psalms and Hymns of modern date been given by inspiration? or does the superior light of the last days supersede the necessity of inspiration in their composition?

From the preceding chapter, it appears that every inspired writing having God for its author, is free from error, defect or redundancy, and authoritative in the determination of all questions contemplated by it, and in demanding the unqualified reception of its doctrines, and absolute submission to its rules, of those to whom it is given.

The characteristics of inspiration, which have been enumerated, being admitted, and the scripture points them out to us, there can be no longer a difficulty in excluding the claims of any, the most distinguished theological writers, whether of prose or of verse, who have lived subsequent to the Apostles, to inspiration. In whatever estimation the names of Calvin, of Beza, of Owen, of Newton, of Watts, and of Dwight, with a host of others, are held, with whatever pleasure their works are read, however profitable their writings may have proved in the elucidation and defence of truth, and in the edification of the church, they have no intrinsic excellence in them Their

names as divines, are honored, because associated with sincere piety, and their works in a theological point of view derive their value from being founded on the word of God. We can only receive them upon comparison with the word of God, and a discovery of the identity of the doctrines which they teach with the doctrines of scripture. The very examination and trial of their writings by the lively oracles of God, implies the conviction, that possibly there may be found in them, deviations from the inspired standard. Is there one in the Christian church, who would take up the writings, or any part of the writings of Newton, for instance, of Watts, or of Wesley, and say "Here is a book in which there is not one error, or dubious expression, in which there is not wanting one statement necessary to render it perfect, and perfectly adapted to its end, in which there will not be found one superfluous proposition or illustration, one mere conjecture, one sentence which could be spared, without marring the beauty, the arrangement, the perspicuity, the fulness; by which I am bound, the truth of which I dare not question, apart from all external evidence, which is the rule of my faith and practice, and to which I appeal freely and finally in all controversies of a religious nature; from which the individual, who dissents, is guilty of rejecting the truth and denying the authority of God?" I confidently hope there is not one. I am persuaded there is not one.—And if not then there is not one who does not deny the inspiration of Newton, of Watts, or of Wesley.

The third fact is, I consider, proved, that no Book or Books, subsequent to the Psalms of David have been given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to constitute the matter of the church's praise; and it has been proved that an inspired collection of Songs was necessary from the fact that one was given by inspiration. But if the existence of a collection of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs given by inspiration, infer that it was necessary one should be given to the church, the conclusion which follows from the third fact is, that no second inspired collection was needed in the church,—is needed by us under this dispensation. A second collection of Songs, dictated by the Spirit, must be unnecessary for one of three reasons: Either believers are not required to praise God in a Song under the New Testament dispensation,—or the superior advantages of later times enable Christians, or Christian Ministers to write without the special aid of inspiration, with an accuracy, a propriety, and a precision, which the Old Prophet required the aid of inspiration to exhibit—or the Psalms of David are not divested of their adaptation to the exigencies of a worshipping people by their age, and do not require to be superseded by any others.

1. Shall we suppose that believers are not required to praise God in the use of Songs under the New Testament dispensation. Is this the reason that God has not supplied us with Psalms and Songs, specially designed for the members of Christ in the last days of the world? It has been shown in the introduction, from the exam-

ple of Christ and his Apostles, and from inspired precept, that the church is still required to sing praise that it constitutes a permanent part of instituted worship. Perhaps

2. The superior light shed upon the church enables Christians, or Ministers of reconciliation to write, without the special aid of inspiration, with an accuracy, a propriety and a precision, which they required the immediate direction of the Holy Ghost to exhibit, who lived previous to the incarnation of the Son of God. From the manner in which Dr. Watts has introduced the words of our Lord concerning John the Baptist, he would seem to have thought they implied as much. "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." (Math. xi. 11.)--There is evidently no reference here to a capability of writing upon divine subjects, or on any subject, with propriety and accuracy. The writings of every inspired penman lay claim to infallible accuracy—to unerring propriety. In these respects, therefore, one inspired writer cannot be greater than another, and, much less, an uninspired writer greater than one inspired. John, *as a teacher of divine things*, could not possibly be greater than the Prophet Isaiah, nor the *greatest* in the Kingdom of God greater than John.

There is nothing more common, nor less liable to misconstruction, than the application of the term *greater*, when not an inherent, but a relative, not a personal, but an official superiority is

intended. "Only in the throne will I be *greater* than thou," says Pharaoh to Joseph, when, it can scarcely be doubted, he considered his servant in point of intellectual strength and wisdom, his superior. "This man Mordecai waxed *greater* and *greater*," we read, when there is simply a reference to the office he filled and the extent of his reputation. "Whether is *greater*, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth?" It is readily answered, he that sitteth at meat, yet in regard to talent, education, intelligence, the servant may be vastly superior to his master.—Because, according to the terms of the covenant of redemption, the Saviour was the servant of the Father, he says, "My Father is *greater* than I," though the names given to him, the attributes and works ascribed to him, prove him to be the Father's *equal*,—his *fellow*, as he is styled in Isaiah.

John is introduced to notice, not in his personal but his prophetic character, in connection with the special province assigned to him among them who had been or should be appointed to reveal Christ Jesus the Lord. See the parallel passage in Luke vii. 28, "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater *prophet* than John the Baptist: but he that is (the) least (prophet) in the kingdom of God is greater than he." How is John *more* than a prophet? In the *nearer* place he occupied to the Lord. He was not more holy, more faithful, more inspired, or more accurate in declaring the word of God. But whereas they were sent before to announce that a deliverer should rise out of Judah, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob, John occupies the

distinguished place of his Forerunner, to prepare the way for him, proclaim his immediate approach, and point him out. This is the reason our Lord assigns for describing him, as *more than a prophet.* "What went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and *more than a prophet.* For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." How is the least prophet in the kingdom of Heaven greater than John? He occupies a still more honorable place than John did. He is a companion and a friend, and has discoveries made to him which were hidden from all the greatest that had gone before him, or were only obscurely unfolded to them. "And he turned unto his disciples, and said privately. Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things that ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

Or is it urged that superiority is ascribed not merely to the least prophet, but to the least saint in the kingdom of God? Be it granted.—He has a relative superiority. His lot is ordered in a time of greater light and greater glory;—glory eclipsing all the splendor of a former dispensation. "If the ministration of condemnation be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect by reason of the glory that excelleth." The shadows have fled away.—The veil has been taken from

the face of Moses. The mysteries, which were seen dimly through types and figures, are discovered before the New Testament Saint, in their proper character and substance. He has clearly set before him the mystery of Christ, in relation to the application to all nations of the benefits of redemption, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit," and through them "to the saints." He is presented with a view in a historical form, of the accomplishment of that plan of salvation, which the prophets did not fully comprehend, who foretold the coming of Christ, by whom the plan was carried into effect, and the sufferings, by which he was perfected. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, and what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." He occupies a place, in which he has greater advantages for the investigation of prophecy than the prophets who uttered the predictions. In one word the canon of scripture completed, is put into his hands.

Does it follow, because a man has greater light, more abundant means of information upon all religious subjects, has advantages greater than Prophets, (inspiration out of the question,) that he is wiser? His responsibility is increased, and, alas! often his guilt. Night, twilight, and the light of a meridian Sun, are alike to him whose

eyes are closed. "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." However abundant the means of knowledge, even with the understanding awake to their importance and the manner of using them, our knowledge, acquired in the use of means, is necessarily gradual, and our progress cannot be greater than the energy and diligence with which they are employed. Men, whose knowledge is accumulated by the use of means, may be found in all stages from ignorance to perfection. The Hebrew Christians, to whom Paul writes, as we, belonged to the kingdom of God, and yet he addressed them thus:—"When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one *teach you* again which be the *first principles of the oracles of God.*" (Heb. v. 12.) They were ignorant of the *first principles* of the oracles of God, or but imperfectly acquainted with them. But the *least* among them was greater than John —than all the Jewish prophets. It will not however be said, that a man who needs to be taught which be the first principles of the oracles of God, is as well qualified to write Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs as David; it will not be said that he is qualified at all. The superiority, therefore, of the children of God's kingdom must consist in something which does not necessarily infer greater wisdom, or a capability of standing among prophets, much less above them, in writing for the church. They enjoyed the advantages and privileges of the New Covenant, concerning whom Paul writes thus to Timothy,

—"From a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of others; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." (1 Tim. i. 6, 7.) And are there not many still ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God within the church? And are there not many who desire to be teachers who understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm?

Men may be allowed to possess a knowledge of facts, doctrines, precepts, promises, &c., of revelation and still not be qualified to write with an accuracy, ensuring the faithful communication of what they know. Men who have obtained a liberal education, it will be said are qualified. But a liberal education constitutes no part of that superiority which is predicated of those who belong to the Kingdom of God. All Christians have not a liberal education, and many, who enjoy all its advantages do not belong to Christ. But the least in the Kingdom of God possesses the superiority of which our Lord makes mention.

What is the practical evidence that men of talents, education, piety never questioned, have produced of being able to come into competition with prophets in writing for the benefit of the church. The spirit of Truth is the spirit of consistency. The truth is always consistent with itself. The word of inspiration therefore never can contradict itself. No contradiction accordingly is to be found among inspired writers from Moses to John. They all "*speak the same thing.*" How much contradiction among theological wri-

ters—among *writers of Hymns?*—among men whose *sacred songs* are used as the *matter* of praise! How much opposition among professors, and ministers (so called and so received) of Christ, while all profess to derive their knowledge from the same source, and that affording no ground of division, because it is one! Upon every doctrine of revelation, upon the most prominent, there has been and is diversity of views. This is a bad argument of ability to write with as much propriety and accuracy as Prophets,—to supply an adequate substitute for the spiritual songs given by inspiration. With this fact before his eyes, the man who would place an uninspired individual, whatever may be his character or attainments, upon a level with an inspired one, not to say above him, as a writer, can hardly be considered of a sound mind. Among men of conflicting sentiments, in possession of the same facilities for acquiring information, upon religious subjects, how shall we select the man whose accuracy is complete? We cannot. We must receive the writings of all with cautious examination; and when we find them intruding into a place which belongs not to them, however great their inherent value, we must give them the same treatment that the Priests did Uzziah, King of Judah, when he went into the temple of the Lord, to burn incense upon the altar of incense. But indeed if one individual be found wandering into the mazes of error, in the enjoyment of all the advantages common to Christians, we can no longer consider those advantages a security against error and deviation in any.

If the superior advantages of the Christian dispensation do not qualify men to write with infallible accuracy,—accuracy equal to that of inspiration, we must still look for another reason why an inspired collection of songs, in addition to the one with which the church has been presented, or designed to supersede its use, is not necessary. Perhaps

3. The Old Testament Psalms are sufficient for the church still, and adapted to her present state. This brings us forward to the examination of the FOURTH and last FACT upon which our argument rests, and the consideration of which shall form the subject of another chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

Are the Psalms of David adapted to the State of the Church under this Dispensation, as under the former?

THE reason why it was not necessary that a *second* collection of songs for the use of the church, should be given by inspiration, remains to be pointed out. It is found in the FOURTH FACT from which we argue in favor of the exclusive use of the "Songs of Zion" in the celebration of praise.

The Book of Psalms is no less adapted to our situation and times, than it was to the situation of the Israelites, and the times of their national existence.

This fact will be admitted by every one who is acquainted with the Books;—not by those who are acquainted merely with what has been said respecting it, or respecting a metrical translation of it, with which it has often been foolishly confounded, but with the *book itself;*—not by those who know only a few verses, detached by prejudice or impiety to produce an impression unfavorable to its introduction into, or its continuance in its proper place, but who know the *whole book;*—not by those who understand its language as it has often been interpreted by man, (and indeed they, if consistent, should deny that it ever

became the lips of a worshipper of a God of *love*) but who receive it as it is interpreted by him, by whom it was dictated. "Numberless," says Gray, "are the testimonies that might be produced in praise of these admirable compositions, which contain, indeed, a complete epitome of the history, doctrines, and instructions of the Old Testament, delivered with every variety of style that can encourage attention, and framed with an elegance of construction superior far to the finest models in which Pagan antiquity hath enclosed its mythology. These invaluable Hymns are daily repeated without weariness, though their beauties are often overlooked in familiar and habitual perusal. As Hymns immediately addressed to the Deity, they reduce righteousness to practice, and while we acquire the sentiments, we perform the offices of piety."—"They present religion to us," says Bishop Horne, "in its most engaging dress; communicating truths which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal; while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of redemption." And Watts himself, with a remarkable, but most happy contradiction, proclaims the book of Psalms "the most noble, most devotional, and divine collection of poesy;"—that there "never was a piece of experimental divinity so nobly written, and so justly reverenced and admired." Let us now enquire whether we have not good reason for appropriating these compositions so highly extolled, and so justly, to our own use, and whether there be any want of adapta-

tion in them to our circumstances, on account of which we must lay them aside, and introduce the less noble, but more suitable songs of modern date.

SECTION I.

THERE is *no part* of Scripture which brings the *Saviour* more fully to view than the *Book of Psalms.*

The Psalms exhibit him, in his person, character, offices, and work. The assertion is not conjectural:—it is not supported by any fanciful interpretation of the Psalms, not by fallible authority, but by an inspired application of inspired language. When the Apostle of the Gentiles would teach the Hebrew the superiority of Christ to all angels,—that he is "God over all, blessed forever," the object of worship in heaven and on earth, he appeals almost exclusively to the Book of Psalms. Of seven quotations, in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, from the Old Testament, six are from the Psalms of David; and some have supposed that the seventh is from the same book. To show the necessary subserviency, of the incarnation of Christ, to the work of redemption, he refers to the Book of Psalms, in three cases out of four. (Heb. i. and ii.) To prove the paramount claim of Messiah, as a Prophet and Legislator, in comparison with Moses himself, Paul adduces the Psalms. (Heb. iii. and iv: 1–13.) When he would show the divine origin, the dignity, the efficiency, the permanence of the Priesthood of Christ, its superiority, in both sacrifice and intercession, to the

Aaronic, he turns to the Psalms. (Heb. iv. and v.) When he brings forward the doctrine of his ascension to the right hand of the Father, and his investiture with universal authority, he shows that the same is taught in the Book of Psalms. (Rom. xv. 25–28. Heb. ii. 8, 9.) The mission of the Apostles and their successors, and the promulgation of the gospel among all nations, the inspired writer discovers in the Psalms. "Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." These words of David are thus applied by the Apostles. Eph. iv. 9–13. ("Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, &c." Again we read, "Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.—O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people." These words are thus applied in Rom. xv. 8, 9, 11. "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy: *as it is written*, "For this cause, I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto

thy name.—And again, praise the Lord all ye Gentiles, and laud him all ye people."

The history of the leading particulars of the life of Immanuel is anticipated in the Psalms.—It is a small matter that many see nothing in them except the history of David's or of Asaph's life and experience, when holy Apostles saw, and have discovered to us by the spirit, that the Lord our righteousness is a much more prominent object than the sons of Jesse and Barachiah.

The following particulars are selected from those which are taught in the Psalms of David.

1. The rejection of Christ by the Jewish Doctors. "The stone which the builders refused, is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." The application of these words is made by Jesus himself, and twice by Peter. Compare Matt. xxi. 42. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8, with Ps. cxviii. 22, 23.

2. The circumstances of his public entrance into Jerusalem are declared in the spirit of prophecy. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." The Saviour points out the application of these words. He enters Jerusalem, seated on an ass, attended by a multitude, some spreading their garments in the way, some strewing branches, all proclaiming, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest:" and he displays his authority as a Son over his own house by turning them out of the temple that had

converted his Father's residence into a place of merchandize. "And when the chief Priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" The Priests and Scribes are silent. *The enemy and the avenger is still.*—Compare Ps. viii. 2. with Matt. xxi. 5–16.

3. In the Psalms the combination of all nations against the Saviour is revealed. "The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." And we learn the views of the disciples respecting the passage from the following words; —"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand, and thy counsel, determined before to be done. Ps. ii. 23, compared with Acts iv. 26—28.

4. The partition of Christ's raiment when he is being crucified, with the particular mode by which his seamless coat was disposed of, is set before us in the Book of Psalms, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my my vesture." How literally was this verified in the man of Nazareth! So literal was the accom-

plishment, that no man can doubt that Messiah speaks in the twenty-second Psalm by the mouth of David. As the words of the Son of David it was received by the Evangelist. "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, they parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots." John xix. 23, 24.

5. The Jews read and sung in the Psalms, the Saviour's pathetic expression of his sense of desertion, in the hour when the powers of darkness were let loose, and his expression of confidential reliance when about to give up the ghost. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." Ps. xxii. 1 and xxxi. 5, compared with Matt. xxvii. 46, and Luke xxiii. 46.

If a full and perspicuous exhibition of the person and work, the trials and triumphs of the Captain of salvation should recommend a collection of songs to the attention of Christians,—if it argue their adaptation to the christian church, as the matter of her praise, that recommendation belongs to the Book of Psalms in a pre-eminent degree. The preceding references may serve, in some measure to remove the impression, which would seem to have been made upon the minds of some, that an exhibition of the peculiarities of a typical dispensation, is the most prominent fea-

ture of the Songs of Zion. The peculiarities of those Songs are the peculiarities of the everlasting covenant, and of the divine life.

The subject of the Psalms, as a display of him who is all our salvation and all our desire, has however, only been touched. Instead of proceeding from Psalm to Psalm, for the purpose of pointing out the Redeemer, brought forth directly or indirectly in almost all, (which would be tedious, though not otherwise difficult,) we shall take the more expeditious, and perhaps more profitable plan of laying down a general rule, by which it may, with great facility be discovered, when Christ is either the speaker, or the object contemplated in any given Psalm. This rule is one taught by the Apostles, Peter and Paul:—it is one which they united in employing in the interpretation of the language of the Psalms;—it is one which, by consequence, is sanctioned by the Spirit. It is the Spirit's rule for the legitimate exposition of his own words. Simplicity is its recommendation.

The rule is this:—When an expression is used in one of the Psalms, which is not true of the writer when the first person is used, nor of the apparent object, contemplated by the writer, when the second or third person is used, it may safely be taken for granted that Jesus Christ in the former case, is the speaker, in the latter that he is addressed or spoken of.

Consider how the Apostles apply this rule, with the utmost harmony. Turn to the sixteenth Psalm. "I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the

night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope, For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." The words which have been read, Peter repeats in his address to the mixed multitude which had congregated together, attracted by the miraculous events of the day of Pentecost, and proceeds to reason upon them in the following strain,—"Men and brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn unto him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." (Acts ii. 29–31.) When we read the Psalm, we might be ready to suppose David the speaker declaring his own resolution, and confidence and joy. "*I* have set the Lord always before me,—He is at *my* right hand—therefore *my* heart is glad." This Peter evidently takes for granted. But presently we meet with a declaration, upon which he fixes the attention of his audience, which cannot be explained of David or any other human person. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to

see corruption." Here we are at a stand. David disappears. The Apostle puts his hearers in mind that David is dead and buried, that his sepulchre was still before their eyes to testify that his soul had been left in hell, and that his flesh had seen corruption. David, therefore, he concludes is not speaking of himself. He is the organ of another, of whom every part of the song is true. Of Christ the words are true. He has been raised from the dead, without having seen corruption. The inference is, Christ speaks by David.

Paul adopts the same rule of interpretation. He quotes a part of the eighth Psalm, (4,6,) "But one in a certain place testified, saying What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." As the cursory reader might be ready to suppose that the Psalmist designs merely to set forth the sovereignty and honor, conferred upon man by his Creator, in appointing him Lord of this lower world, the Apostle is willing for a moment to admit it, that he may from the admission, take occasion to point out the fallacy of the supposition. He compares the concluding declaration with facts. "He hath put all things in subjection under his feet." If then *all* things are subjected, it follows plainly, the Creator "left nothing which is not put under him." But is this consistent with facts,—facts which are open to the observation of all? Are

all things, without exception, in this world, under man's feet? Do all obey him? Every one is ready to answer, "Far from it." A very small proportion of the beasts of the field or the fowls of the air, or of the fish of the sea, is subject to his control. Many of them are objects calculated to inspire, and inspiring terror into his heart: and then over winds, and waves, the thunder, the earthquake, and the rain, he has no power. Long as man is supposed to have reigned, his power is still confined within very narrow limits. "But now we *see not yet* all things put under him." Of whom then does the penman speak in the eighth Psalm? Of mere man plainly he is not speaking, or the testimony is false which he brings. Paul teaches us that it is of the "man" approved of God by signs and wonders wrought by him, while he sojourned on earth,—of the "son of man," who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Of him the words of the Psalm are true, in the most absolute sense of them. "We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."—Heb. ii. 6–9.

Such is the rule, and such is the authority by which it is recommended. Let it be tried upon those Psalms which the New Testament writers interpret of the Saviour. If it fail in one instance, it cannot be singly relied on. We shall bring forward but a few examples. Read the second Psalm. The question to be determined is, whether David be intended by the *King*, who is said to be set upon the Holy Hill of Zion, and Solo-

mon the *Son* mentioned toward the conclusion of the Psalm; or whether Christ be both God's *King* and *Son*. If there be found language not true of David or Solomon, the Saviour is revealed to us. "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Was this realised in David? or in Solomon? No. Consequently we look for their fulfilment in Christ, the Father's Anointed. See the eighteenth Psalm. "The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." David's hands and feet never were pierced. Lots never were cast upon his vesture. The Psalm is the words of Christ speaking by David. In the fortieth Psalm we read;—sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire;—burnt offering, and sin offering hast thou not required.—Were no sacrifices according to the ceremonial law, required of David? They were, and he presented them, in obedience to the divine injunction. But the fulfilment of the law, in its moral obligation, was required of Christ, and he magnified the law and made it honorable. Additional examples are not necessary.

When the Book of Psalms is read in the light of Evangelists and Apostles, Christ will be found set forth in it very fully. If we look for a collection of Hymns or Psalms, or Spiritual Songs bringing the Saviour more fully, than he is brought to view in the Songs of Zion, we shall look in

vain. To expect another exhibiting him with unerring correctness would be even more vain if possible.

So thought Bishop Horsely. His words as cited by H. Horne, (Int. v. 4. p. 27.) are, "Of those (Psalms) which allude to the life of David, there are *none* in which the Son of David is not the principal and immediate subject. David's complaints against his enemies are Messiah's complaints, first of the unbelieving Jews, then of the heathen persecutors and of the apostate faction in later ages. David's afflictions are Messiah's sufferings. David's penitential supplications are Messiah's, under the burden of the imputed guilt of man. David's songs of triumph and thanksgiving are Messiah's songs of triumph and thanksgiving, for his victory over sin, and death, and hell. In a word, there is not a page of this book of Psalms, in which the pious reader will not find his Saviour, if he reads with a view of finding him.—It should seem, (p. 113) the Spirit of Jehovah would not be wanting to enable a mere man to make complaint of *his own enemies*, to describe *his own sufferings just as he felt them*, and *his own escapes just as they happened.* But the Spirit of Jehovah described, by David's utterance, what was known to that Spirit only, and that Spirit only could describe. So that, if David be allowed to have any knowledge of the true subject of his own compositions, it was nothing in his own life, but something put into his mind by the Holy Spirit of God; and the misapplication of the Psalms to the literal David has done more mischief, than the misapplication of any other parts of the Scrip-

ture, among those who profess the belief of the Christian Religion."

SECTION II.

In the Psalms more especially, there is a most happy adaptation of the language to the state of THE CHURCH.

WHILE the phraseology was truly appropriate in the lips of those who lived before the incarnation of the Son of God, it has lost none of its propriety in the lips of believers to whom that event is matter of history. This is a feature of the Psalms, though not exclusive, yet more prominent, which has too often been overlooked. It has very frequently been taken for granted, that the Songs, adapted to the Church in the period of youth, when her members trusted in a Saviour promised, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, in predictions not verified by the event, in their worship, were regulated by the precepts of a ceremonial law soon to be abrogated, and subjected to local and temporary restrictions, must be inappropriate among those who look to a Saviour who has already come, and "by one sacrifice forever perfected them that are sanctified," to whom prediction has put on the garb of history, before whose eyes the shadows have passed away, and who worship God in every place with equal acceptance. But have they who think that this must be obvious from the very nature of things, examined with care the mode of expression which the Spirit has employed in the Psalms? Are we required in using them, to celebrate the personal and official glories of a Saviour, *as yet to come?*

to sing predictions, already verified by their accomplishment, in terms which imply that their fulfilment is still an object of hope? to employ language which supposes that we are still under the yoke of a burdensome ritual? and to speak as if we were under the same local restrictions, in tendering the public expressions of our homage, with the Jews? That the answer to all these questions must be given in the negative, shall, it is believed, appear from an attentive examination of the following particulars:

1. The *inefficacy* of *legal sacrifices* is taught in the Psalms. They are not merely represented as about to pass away, but as having already passed away. In the exercise of that faith which is the "substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," the inspired writer anticipates the period to which his hopes are directed, and speaks of its liberty in the language of one who had seen the Kingdom of God come with power. God had spoken; and he exults in what God has promised, as if it were already realised; so that in some instances, the power of faith being kept out of view, the reader might be ready to suppose the language of some of the Psalms more appropriate in the mouth of a Christian than of a Jew. Take the following examples: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened; burnt offering, and sin offering hast thou not required." (xl. 6.) These are the words of Christ according to the testimony of Paul; but that he speaks in the name of his people as well as in his own, appears from the preceding verse. "Many, O Lord my God, are

thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to *us*-ward:" Again, "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, no he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: and call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (l. 8–15.) And in the subsequent verses of the Psalm, when God calls the open contemner of his name to an account, he charges him, not with the neglect of ceremonial rites, but with a love of darkness, with theft, adultery, profanity, deceit, slander, and want of natural affection. Contrast the preceding passage with the words of Malachi, (i. 7, 8.) "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say wherein have we polluted thee? And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame, and sick is it not evil?—(iii. 8.) Will a man rob God? But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." If Christians were required, in using the Psalms, to employ such terms, plainly implying the continued obligation of ceremonies, it would be at once conceded that they are inappropriate. Once

more.—"For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering." (li. 16.) What? Was no sacrifice or offering, according to the law, required of David? Assuredly the ceremonial law was obligatory upon him, and he observed it. But he knew that legal sacrifices only served for the purifying of the flesh, and that a better sacrifice was wanted to expiate the guilt of the soul. Besides, directed by the Spirit, he adopts language which faith warrants, and the subjects of it in the last ages may appropriate. One other quotation and I have done. "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox, or bullock, that hath horns and hoofs." (lxix. 30, 31.)

It must be admitted, and it is admitted most willingly, that allusions to ceremonial acts of worship, and also to the localities of the Israelitish residence, and of their city, and temple, abound in the book of Psalms. There are few however, with those passages present to their minds, which teach the inefficacy of sacrifice, who would say that the adoption of phraseology borrowed from ancient rites, is adapted to convey the idea of the permanent obligation of them upon those who use it. And if Jerusalem, and Zion, and Palestine are represented, as the permanent seat of worship and place of rest, it may appear in the sequel, that that is no objection to the present use of the Psalms which furnish such representations.

The Apostle points out a distinction of sacrifices into *legal* and *spiritual*. "Above when he said, sacrifice and offering, and burnt offering, and

offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein." Thus far the Apostle, in the words of the fortieth Psalm. And he immediately adds, "*which are offered by the law.*" Sacrifices are still required but not *legal* sacrifices. The use of the language of the Psalms implies an obligation to offer sacrifices, but not *legal* sacrifices. "Which are offered by the law." (Heb. x. 8.) The Psalms themselves furnish an explanation of sacrifices, and offerings, as obligatory upon believers of every age, founded as you will at once perceive upon the distinction which the Apostle holds up to view. I shall put down a few verses without comment—"Offer the sacrifices of *righteousness* and put your trust in the Lord.—Whoso *offereth* praise glorifieth me.—The sacrifices of God are a *broken spirit*, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,—Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of *righteousness*, with burnt offering and with whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks from thine altar.—I will freely sacrifice unto thee: *I will praise thy name*, O Lord, for it is good.—I will offer to thee the sacrifice of *thanksgiving*, and will call upon the name of the Lord.—Let my prayer be set forth before thee as *incense;* and the lifting up of my hands as *the evening sacrifice.*"

The use of terms borrowed from the ancient economy is authorized by the example of New Testament writers. They describe the character, the duties, the worship, and the privileges of Christians in the language of the people of Israel. The consistency of the language of the Psalms with

the spirit and the institutions of the present time will appear from the subsequent parallelism, suggested by a comparison of the terms employed by the penman of the Psalms with those introduced in the New Testament: unless it should be said that there is something "Jewish and cloudy" in the writings of Christ and his Apostles, which is removed by the more lucid modes of speech which some of their more spiritual followers may teach us to use.

PSALMS.	NEW TESTAMENT.
Ps. xlvi. 4. There is a river, the streams of which shall make glad the *city of God*, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High—xlviii. 2. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great *king*.—li. 18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto *Zion:* build thou the walls of *Jerusalem*.—liii. 6. Oh that the salvation of *Israel* were come out of *Zion!* When God bringeth back the captivity of his *people*, Jacob shall rejoice, and *Israel* shall be glad.	Heb. xii. 22. But ye are come unto *Mount Zion*, and unto the *city of the living God*, the heavenly *Jerusalem*, Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8. They are not all *Israel* which are of Israel: neither because they are the *seed of Abraham*, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the *children of God:* but the *children of the promise* are counted for the *seed*. Gal. vi. 16. Peace be on them, and upon the *Israel of God*.
Ps. xxvii. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the *house of the Lord* all the days of my life, to behold the	Jno. ii. 19. Jesus answered and said unto them, destroy this *temple*, and in three days I will raise it up. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Know ye not that ye are

beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his *Temple.* xlviii. 9. We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy *Temple.* lii. 8. But I am like a green *olive tree in the house of God:*

the *temple* of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? 1 Tim. iii. 15. That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the *house of God*, which is the *church* of the living God.

Ps. liv. 3. For *strangers* are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul. cxxxvii. 4.—How shall we sing the Lord's song in a *strange* Land!

Eph. ii. 19. Now therefore ye are no more *strangers* and *foreigners*, but *fellow-citizens*, with the saints, and of the *household* of God.

Ps. cvi. 4, 5. Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto *thy people:* O visit me with thy salvation: that I may see the good of *thy chosen*, that I may rejoice in the gladness of *thy nation*, that I may glory with thine *inheritance.* cxxxii. 9. Let thy *priests* be clothed with righteousness. cxlviii. 14. He also exalteth the horn of *his people*, the praise of all his saints even of the children of Israel, *a people near unto him.*

1. Pet. ii. 9. But ye are a *chosen* generation, a royal *priesthood*, an *holy nation*, a *peculiar people;* that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you. Col. i. 12. Giving thanks unto the father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the *inheritance* of the saints in light.

Ps. xlii. 4. When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the *multitude*, I went with them to the house of God, with

Eph. i. 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might *gather together in one, all things* in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are

the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday. cxxii. 3, 4. *Jerusalem* is builded as a *city* that is compact together: whither the *tribes go up*, the *tribes of the Lord*, unto *the testimony of Israel*, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are set *thrones of judgment*, the *thrones of the house of David*.

on earth; even in him. Heb. 12. Ye are come unto the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an *innumerable company of angels*, to the *general assembly* and *church* of the first born, which are written in heaven, to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and *to Jesus* the Mediator of the New Covenant. Luke i. 32. The Lord shall give unto him (Jesus) the *throne of his father David*.

Ps. l. 5. Gather my saints together to me; those that have made a covenant with me *by sacrifice*. lxvi. 15. I will offer unto thee burnt *sacrifices* of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. cxviii. 27. Bind the *sacrifice* with cords, even unto the horns of the *altar*. xliii. 4. Then will I go unto the *altar* of God, unto God, my exceeding joy.

Rom. xii. 1. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living *sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Ye also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy *priesthood*, to offer up *spiritual sacrifices*, acceptable to God *by Jesus Christ*. Heb. xiii. 10. We have an *altar*, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle.

Ps. cxxxvii. 1, 8. By the rivers of *Babylon*, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. O daughter of Babylon, who art *to be destroyed; happy shall* HE *be*

Rev. xvii. 5. And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, *Babylon* the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. xviii. 20. *Rejoice over her*,

that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us.

thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets; for *God* hath avenged you on her.

Before a comparison of the mode of expression used in the Psalms with that which is found in the New Testament, every objection to the use of the Songs of Zion, on account of the frequent allusions which they contain to the nature and circumstances of the religious institutions of Israel, vanishes. It is not intended to make the impression that there is no allusion to the types in the Book of Psalms, which is not found introduced by Christ and his Apostles to describe spiritual things. But we find them using figurative language derived from all the *leading* and *primary* characters of the former economy; and in this they furnish an evidence of the correctness and consistency of *Christians*, putting the name of the type to express the *thing typified.*

The allusions to the various musical instruments, used by the Israelites in the temple service occasionally found in the Psalms, may be explained upon the principle, to which the preceding argument conducts us, in perfect consistency with the exclusion of them all from our places of worship. The reason that I have not taken particular notice of them, as of allusions to other typical institutions, is a desire to avoid the question respecting the *mode* of singing the praises of the Lord, which is not necessarily connected with the examination of the character of the Hymns which should be introduced into the sanctuary.

2. Predictions in the Psalms, and, in particular, those of which Christ is the subject, which admit of a *definite accomplishment before the consummation of all things*, are presented in a *historical* form. Had such events as are foretold in the Psalms been exhibited *as future*, we could not have used the Songs which supply the predictions that have already had their accomplishment, without pronouncing the language of expectation and hope, when we well knew that the object contemplated had become matter of fact. But the spirit has revealed them in such a form that there can remain no doubt of a designed accommodation of the Psalms to every age, and an adaptation to permanent use in the church. Were there not unquestionable evidence of the contrary we might be ready to suppose many of the prophetic psalms written subsequent to the events they record, with, a special view to the service of the New Testament church. Predictions on the contrary that do not admit of a definite fulfilment before the second coming of Christ, and are being fulfilled progressively from age to age, appear in their natural future form. These predictions, like the promises of the new covenant, whatever partial accomplishment they may have had, or to whomsoever they may have been realised in particular, are still to be fulfilled, are still the foundation of the saints' hopes, and patient expectations. We shall illustrate the preceding remarks by a few examples out of many that might be brought forward. In the second psalm we read, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." The actual ascension

of Immanuel to the right hand of the majesty on High, his formal investiture with mediatorial authority did not take place till after his resurrection from the dead. Yet we do not read, "I *will* set," but "I *have* set my King upon my holy hill." When an event is predicted which is progressively perfected, mark the change of tense; "I *will* declare the decree." "I *shall* give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." The exaltation of Christ is an event perfected and past, but the subjection of the Gentiles to the sceptre of Immanuel is progressive:—is past, passing, and to come to pass, till all things shall have been subdued. Then cometh the end. The twenty-first psalm affords another illustration. "The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" The son of man has entered into his glory, he has taken possession of the joy set before him: but is his a glory which is evanescent? his a joy which is enjoyed and passes away? No. He has entered into it and still continues in it, and must continue. Therefore the future time is used;—"he *shall* joy,—he *shall* rejoice." The Father's gift to him, however, of mediatorial glory is definitely perfected, and accordingly we read, "Thou *hast given* him his heart's desire, and *has not withholden* the request of his lips." Hear one other example. (Ps. 1.) "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God *hath shined.*" The Israelite could only use this form of speech in the exercise of that faith which is the substance of things hoped for. He might have said, "Out of Zion, God *shall shine:*" we could not.

Both can unite in the language of the text. The words following are, "Our God *shall come* and shall not keep silence." The fourth and sixth verses teach us that these words refer to his second coming,—his coming to judgment.—"That he may judge his people—God is judge himself." With what propriety is the future tense introduced with the change of subject! The one verse speaks of his coming to offer himself in sacrifice;—it is past;—the other of his second coming;—it shall be future till faith be swallowed up in victory.

3. In those Psalms, in which Christ himself is the speaker, it would seem that he uniformly appears before us in the last act of his life of humiliation and sorrow, just about to give up the Ghost; so that he is, as it were, evidently set forth, crucified among us. We may therefore expect to find the Saviour speaking of things as past, present, or future, according to their relation to the point of time when he takes notice of them, Contemplating the objects, concerning which he discourses by the Spirit in the Psalmist, from the cross, he will be found to represent them in that aspect which they bore to himself when about to expire. The following examples may serve to illustrate and confirm the position. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?—I *am* poured out like water, and all my bones *are* out of joint.—They *look* and *stare* upon me. They *part* my garments among them, and *cast* lots upon my vesture." (xxii. 1, 14, 17, 18.) "Into thine hand I *commit* my spirit." (xxxi. 5. The words of the first and last verses, which have

been produced, were those which the Saviour literally uttered, when his sufferings hastened to their close. He speaks of preceding events as past. "The assembly of the wicked *have enclosed* me: they *pierced* my hands and my feet." (xxii. 16.) "I *have heard* the slander of many: fear *was* on every side: while they *took* counsel together against me, they *devised* to take away my life." (xxxi. 13.) "I *have preached* righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I *have not refrained* my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I *have not hid* thy righteousness within my heart; I *have declared* thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I *have not concealed* thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation." (xl. 9, 10.) The purposes, the desire, and the expectation of the expiring Jesus, except that in the eighteenth Psalm (37—43) he shouts victory, and anticipates, in a manner truly natural, the laurels, when the last stroke is ready to fall to the destruction of Satan and his works, are all represented so that their objects appear to be future. "Thou *wilt not leave* my soul in hell: neither *wilt thou suffer* thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou *wilt shew* me the path of life." (xvi. 10.) "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." (xxii. 22.) I *will abide* in thy tabernacle for ever: I *will trust* in the covert of thy wings. Thou *wilt prolong* the king's life; and his years as many generations. He *shall abide* before God for ever." (lxi. 4, 6, 7.) "Open to me the gates of righteousness; I *will go* in to them, and I *will praise* the Lord." (cxviii. 19.)

4. Those parts of the Mediator's privileges and trials in which his people have not only a legal interest, but have actual fellowship with him, are sometimes exhibited as *present* enjoyed or suffered without respect to their relation to the time of his crucifixion. Whatever his people suffer for his sake, he reckons inflicted upon himself, a filling up of that which is behind of his sufferings. The afflictions of Christ may therefore be considered present, repeated again and again in the afflictions of his members. In like manner the special covenant favour bestowed upon the believer may be viewed as a continuation of the Father's promised favour to the Son. The use of the present time when the joys and sorrows of Christ, in which the saints participate in very deed, are introduced to notice, while it must be considered a modification or limitation of the second and third particulars of this section, is no inconsiderable circumstance in Songs designed for the lips of his followers. "The Kings of the earth *set* themselves, and the rulers *take* counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed. (ii. 2.) He *delivereth* me from mine enemies; yea, thou *liftest* me up above those that rise up against me. (xviii. 48.) "The Lord *is* their strength and he, *is* the saving strength of his anointed." (xxviii. 9.)

SECTION III.

The Psalms contain nothing but the language of Unwavering Faith.

"THE fearful and the unbelieving" are classed by the Spirit with the most vile and those who

"have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." If such characters be hateful to a God of truth and holiness, the language of fear and unbelief must ever prove displeasing to him. There is no exercise of the heart, of the tongue, or of the hands, which the Christian is not definitely required to perform in faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The servant of Christ stands by faith, walks by faith, fights in faith, prays in faith: in one word lives by faith; as it is written, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

It must therefore, be evident that when we come into the presence of God, to celebrate his praise in a song, as faith, in exercise is requisite to the acceptable performance of the solemn duty, so the language must be consistent with the state of the mind, it must be that of precious faith, unmixed with distrust and apprehension. We can never praise God in the words which fear and doubting suggest, unless God may accept as praise a declaration of distrust in his promises and of want of reliance upon his well beloved Son. This premised, we observe that

There is no one feature by which the Book of Psalms is distinguished from every other collection of songs which has been appended to it, or substituted in its place, more than this, that it does not contain one expression which faith does not warrant, and will not adopt,—not one inconsistent with a cordial reliance upon the charac-

ter and promises of Jehovah revealed to us in Christ. It is not asserted that the saints have not their seasons of fear, and doubt and perplexity. This is taken for granted in some of the Psalms, and declared in others, but as fear and doubting are not characteristic of them as holy persons, on the contrary spring from the principle of corruption, they are not taught to approach God as if fear and faith were alike to him, though diametrically opposed to each other. In these Psalms we are called upon to contemplate the Christian worshipping before God in all the varied circumstances of life, and uniformly he is seen assured and stable; in particular,

1. "Rejoicing in hope." A vista is always open to the eye of faith, over which no cloud hangs, through which the future is discovered with a degree of clearness that reconciles to present evils, in the anticipation of the happiness about to be enjoyed. A few texts out of a multitude may suffice for the verification of this and the following particulars. Ps. iv. 3, 8. "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call upon him,—I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." ix. 18. "For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever." xx. 5. "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners." xxiii. throughout. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.—Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art

with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. —Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:—and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." xxvii. 3. "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord."

2. Triumphing in the freedom which the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives over sin and death. There is no Psalm in the use of which the professed worshipper is introduced into the gracious presence of God, either to proclaim, to the dishonor of the object of worship, his carnality and unbelief dominant, or the prevalence of carnality and unbelief in others, numbered among the children of God; but in many he is taught to speak the praises of him who gives strength to the weak, stability to the wavering, spirituality to the carnal, and makes the soldier of Jesus, to whatever straits he may have been reduced, more than a conqueror. Ps. iv: 1, 7. "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness; thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy

upon me, and hear my prayer. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." xlii: 4. "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day.—Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God;—for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." In the preceding passage the language of despondency is not found. The time of despondency is past, and has been succeeded by a season of confidence and hope.—God is praised for having dispelled the gloomy clouds, and shone forth upon his servant with the brightness of that light which is diffused by his gracious face. The seventy-third Psalm supplies us with a very beautiful example for illustration. The inspired writer had been, as many have been, severely tried by the apparent contrariety of the dispensations of God's providence toward the righteous and the wicked, to the principles of justice. He had nearly fallen into infidelity, and was ready to draw the conclusion that sanctification is vain, and purity unworthy of cultivation. He does not, however, suppose that the expression of his feelings while he wavered uncertain whether he shall cast in his lot among the prosperous wicked, or adhere to the company of the poor and oppressed citizens of Zion, would form an acceptable song of God. The unerring

Spirit has never moved a holy man to write the language of wavering, to be used in the service of God by himself or others. What else was the heart of Asaph, what his words during the prevalence of his temptation, than a heart disposed to rebellion against the Highest, words expressive of condemnation of God's righteous government. But the exulting shout of victory, obtained thro' the spirit of grace, glorifies God, and the retrospect of past ignorance and past danger, is calculated to promote humility, leads to clearer discoveries of the "sovereign mercy of the Lord," and calls forth every energy of the man to proclaim the praises of him who brings good out of evil, and rescues from external and internal enemies.—And the seventy third Psalm is just the shout of triumph, embracing the most humiliating confession of human weakness, the most ardent expression of love to God, the most unhesitating proclamation of his goodness, apart from all the creature's claims; nay, contrary to the creature's just desert. How correctly the language of strong feeling is presented in the beginning of it? The abruptness with which the writer introduces himself is true to nature, and at once satisfies the reader that here there is no affectation of one feeling, which the soul does not experience. "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a pure heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."—He looks upon envy as no little sin,—he assimilates it to the brink of an awful precipice over which

to stumble is destruction beyond remedy. On the giddy brink he had stood, and while we read, imagination pictures him yet trembling with the vivid recollection of the danger from which he was only saved. Having described the character and situation of some wicked from a view of which his envy had taken its rise, he adds, "Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, how doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most high? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning.—When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." lxxvii: 6, 11. "I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And will he be favorable no more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Is this not the language of unbelief and of distrust? "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" Not in the lips of the inspired penman when writing;—not as constituting a part of the song. It is a painful and humiliating review of the unbelieving weakness of past days, over which faith has triumphed. For it is immediately added, "And I said, this is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.—I will remember the

works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old." One more example and I do not urge the induction farther. lxxxv. 5–8. "Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt thou draw out thy anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land."

3. "Patient in tribulation." The evils of which we have been speaking, are moral either in their own nature, or in their operation. As they are contrary to the fruits of faith, we do not find them introduced, as present, with the worshipper, in any of the songs of Zion. The evils which we notice under the head of tribulation are natural, and their presence implies nothing contrary to the most lively workings of the principle of Faith. Where faith exists, "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." And if the Book of Psalms embrace nothing but the effusions of faith, we may expect to find patience experience, and the assurance of hope that never makes ashamed, exemplified in the midst of the sharpest outward afflictions. When we read, our expectations are not disappointed.—The language which the Psalms hold when presenting the afflicted state of God's people, is uniformly of the following character. Ps. xi. 1. "In the Lord

put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain?" xxv. 17–20. "The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for *I put my trust in thee.*" Observe (1) he traces all his afflctions to their proper source—his sin, and thus teaches us his resignation. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins."—(2) His faith is implied in his importunate supplication for deliverance from the cause and the effect,—sin and sorrow, and is expressed in the argument by which he urges his petition. "For I put my trust in thee." xliv. 13–17. "Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.—All this is come upon us; yet we have not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant." cxlii. 2–5. "I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.—When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, *then thou knewest my path.* In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, *Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.*"

4. "Continuing instant in prayer." The reader of the Scripture does not need to be taught that the prayer of *faith* is imperatively required. The man of prayer has his instructions laid before him, by Christ and his Apostles, very perspicuously. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. Here both sides of one great truth are exhibited:—that the prayer of faith is always answered,—that to the prayer of unbelief God has not given us any reason to expect an answer.

The book of Psalms contains very many prayers, offered up on various occasions, but they are all the prayers of faith. The man whose heart closes with the language of the song which contains any given petition, offers up that petition in faith; his prayer is founded upon a divine promise, he prays according to the will of God, and he is in no danger of asking any thing amiss, to be consumed upon his lusts. Take the following specimen of prayers presented by them who *use* the songs of Zion. Ps. ix: 12, 14. "Have mercy upon me O God; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou *that liftest me up* from the gates of death: that I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: *I will rejoice in thy salvation.*" The con-

cluding clause assures us that the suppliant confidently anticipates an answer. xiii. 3–5. "Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved. But *I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*" xvii. 6. "I have called upon thee, *for thou wilt hear me*, O God." That this is a prayer of faith will be apprehended at once. xviii. 3. "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; *so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*" xxviii. 1. "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my Rock; be not silent to me; lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit." The supplication extends to the end of the fifth verse, and in the sixth we read, "Blessed be the Lord, because *he hath heard the voice of my supplications.*" Is not this a form of words most appropriately addressed to that God, who promises, "Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

The exhibition of the spirit of faith breathing in the Psalms might be extended, so as to include a reference to every part of the collection. Moreover, in order to demonstrate their claim upon the assemblies of Mount Zion, it would be no unprofitable exercise to contrast them with the different compilations of uninspired Hymns or Songs presented to the Church and unrighteously substituted for the Psalms given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. I presume in all, with which I am acquainted, there will be found language that

does not bespeak the exercise of faith in him who employs it.—The Songs of Zion do not number *one* among them adapted to the individual that has not yet been delivered from the slavery of sin, or that has not yet learned to mourn after a godly sort:—in one word to the unbeliever and impenitent. And I have yet to learn a song that would suit such, to sing which, and to call it praise, would not be as grossly insulting to the Deity, as the character of the impenitent and unbeliever is hateful to unspotted purity.

If a clear and full revelation of the Saviour, in his person, offices, and work; if the absence of every thing purely national and temporary, if a phraseology accurately accommodated to the church, independently of every change through which she may pass, whether that change affect her external condition, or her internal organization; if an undeviating expression of that faith, without which it is impossible to please God, prove a collection of songs suitable to christian worshippers, a doubt cannot be entertained that the Psalms of David are recommended by their adaptation to the spiritual worship of that God, who is a spirit, and demands worship in Spirit and in truth.

Hear the testimony of "The Editor of the Bible with the notes of several of the venerable reformers," as recorded by H. Horne, (Int. iv. p. 95.) True: human testimony can never be admitted as *authority* in the decision of the question, respecting the adaptation of the Psalms to our times: but surely the testimony of one uninspired writer, in their favor, is quite as good as

the testimony of another against them, and for that reason I give place to his words. "The language in which Moses and David, and Solomon, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun worshipped God, is applicable to Christian believers. They worship the same God through the same adorable Redeemer; they give thanks for similar mercies, and mourn under similar trials; they are looking for the same blessed hope of their calling, even everlasting life and salvation, through the prevailing intercession of the Messiah."

The united testimony of Gray and Bishop Horne shall close the examination of the last fact. (Gray's Key, p. 220) "The expressions and descriptions of the Psalms may seem to some persons to have been appropriate and peculiar to the Jewish circumstances; and David indeed, employs figures and allusions applicable to the old dispensation. But as in recording temporal deliverances and blessings vouchsafed to the Jews, we commemorate spiritual advantages thereby signified, we use the Psalms with the greatest propriety in our Church. 'We need' says an elegant Commentator, 'but substitute the Messiah for David, the Gospel for the Law, and the church of Christ for the church of Israel: we need but consider the ceremonies and sacrifices of the law, as the emblems of spiritual service, of which every part hath its correspondent figure; and we appropriate the Psalms to our own uses as the noblest treasure of inspired wisdom.'"

Without multiplying testimonies, which the great and the good have given, to the unrivalled beauties of the songs of Zion, and their adapta-

tion to the state of believers even in this age, we shall hasten to a

CONCLUSION.

The subject, which has been discussed in the preceding pages, is not more important in itself than on account of its connections with a variety of high theological questions. The more carefully it is investigated, the more will Christians be persuaded that the decision to which they may come deeply involves the interests of truth in general, and must give a tinge to almost their whole religious system. I am well aware that many do not at present fully apprehend its bearing upon the cause of revealed religion, and the aspect of the church of Christ in the world but seem to consider it an isolated object of thought. But the effect of an erroneous decision upon the part of the disciples of Jesus, will not fail to follow, though they do not know the cause, nor comprehend its operation. There is such an entire oneness in the doctrines of the gospel, that adherence to one error necessarily involves an inconsistency, to escape which, when perceived, must lead to a renunciation of the error, or, what not less frequently happens, the adoption of others to protect one. There is such an intimate connection of all ordinances with those doctrines, that a reciprocal action between religious opinions and the observance of religious institutions is constant. A corruption of the doctrine of Christ must lead to a corruption of divine institutions, and a departure from the simplicity of divine prescript is necessarily followed by a laxity of

principle, if not an unmasked renunciation of the form of sound words. Not a few are of opinion, that the effects of the abandonment of an inspired collection of Songs, and the substitution of expository compositions are already visible and demonstrable. I am not so minutely acquainted with the history of the introduction of uninspired songs, in connection with the state of religion in those Churches where they are used, as to risk an opinion upon this point: but when we compare the present condition of Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, which stedfastly adhere to the Psalms of David, with that of those in which they have been set aside, there does not appear a superiority in the latter sufficient to create a presumption in favor of the purifying and peaceful tendency of the introduction of modern, and, as some suppose, more evangelical Psalms.

In the examination of the question, Whether it be consistent with the revealed will of God, whether it be required of us strictly to adhere to the Bible Psalms free from a consciousness of any motive, private, selfish, or unworthy of a minister of Jesus, I have not sought to enlist in my favor the prejudices of those who are partial to their introduction or continuance, and have studiously avoided uncalled for remarks calculated to wound the feelings of professors who have been accustomed to the use of uninspired Songs in the Church. The reason is, that of the latter there may be many who have never had their attention particularly directed to the subject of Psalmody, never have heard a doubt suggested

of the propriety of laying aside inspired Psalms, in favor of others which they had been accustomed to hear invariably represented as more suitable to the New Testament dispensation, and could not, with propriety, be addressed in common with men, who, having every advantage and excitement to the inquiry, carelessly turn their eyes from viewing it, rudely spurn the subject when brought before them, or, in a pride of their own sufficiency, pour contempt upon every argument which is directed against their own opinions and practices: and on the other hand there may be multitudes adhering to scriptural forms from no better principle than others cleave to those which are unwarranted and anti-scriptural. The form of godliness does not imply the power. Those, therefore, who act upon the principle, which it is the object of the preceding pages to defend, should beware lest their own practice stand in the wisdom of man and not in the power of God: for if they adhere to scriptural doctrines and institutions merely because they have been habituated to them from infancy, or have heard them set forth by ministers and parents, though not in the same degree, they are as truly the followers of men, as he is, who is in principle erroneous, and in practice, guided by another law than Christ's.

The use of David's Psalms in the churches of Christ is no innovation. The deviation from them is the real innovation, has been introduced with culpable haste, and, it is to be feared, without a due examination of their high claims. Till the unbending integrity, the painful and per-

severing investigation of all questions which interested the lovers of scriptural truth, the uncompromising adherence to sound doctrine, and the stern opposition to every error, to every errorist in the defence of his unholy principles, (called of late *bigotry* and *illiberality*,) which characterised the champions of the Reformation, had passed away, and been replaced by that spurious and misnamed *Charity*, which would prohibit the necessary distinction between truth and error to be marked, which would pronounce the man proud, self-righteous and illiberal who dares to say the principles which are opposed to his profession are false and dangerous, in other words, say that he cannot believe both sides of a contradiction, would identify a professor and his opinions and proclaim the enemy of his opinion his personal foe, there was no attempt to displace the inspired Psalms, there was none to prove them unholy and unchristian. The Reformers never thought of looking for their Hymns but to the Psalter. It was Luther's "little book of all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find Psalms and sentiments, which shall apply to his case, and be the same to him, as if they were, for his own sake alone, so expressed, that he could not express them himself, nor find, nor even wish them better than they are."

Nor is the use of the Psalms of David confined to a few inconsiderable and illiterate individuals even now. Though the pretext, in some quarters, for their discontinuance has been the roughness and inelegance of the version which

is in the hands of Presbyterians in particular, few will have the boldness to assert that those who have urged that pretext are more distinguished for a refined taste than the many from whom they have dissented: and certainly they have never attempted to supply us with a better. Perhaps the attempt would only expose their own folly, if they did not discover in time to save their blushes, the correctness of Boswell's opinion, that "it is in vain to look for a better." I rejoice that the cause, for which I am an humble advocate, is above the stigma, that it is the cause either of a party, or of the ignorant and superstitious. It is the cause of Presbyterians, in every part of the British empire, with a very few exceptions, and these not likely to give a tone to public sentiment, or to exert a very extensive influence in directing public practice. It is the cause of the Church of England. Upon the subject of the Psalms Episcopalians and Presbyterians are, in principle, perfectly agreed. They differ merely in this, that they use different versions. And it will be seen in the Appendix, that one of her greatest ornaments did not highly esteem the version used in the Church of England. Romaine likewise whose praises are deservedly beyond the limits of Episcopacy, tells us that he occasionally used the Scotch version, "when it appeared to him better expressed than the English, that he considered it nearer to the original than any other, and that, in it, is every thing great, and noble and divine, although not in Dr. Watts' way or style."

Many seem to think the subject of the Psalms

to be used by the assemblies of Mount Zion, of little moment, that it is a matter of indifference whether, for instance, we use Rouse's *version*, or Watts' imitation, and therefore put the question aside as unprofitable and vain. One thing they shall find vain indeed; to attempt to evade the inquiry into the claims of Zion's Songs. It may be postponed, but it cannot be evaded. Ultimately it must come forward, it will press itself, with resistless force into notice: and God is never without the means of directing universal attention to one point. The world has frequently been surprised to find the minds of Christians, in the most widely divided countries, called almost simultaneously into exercise respecting subjects that had very partial notice before. It is unnecessary to enumerate instances with which all are familiar.

The divisions which have obtained, and at present exist in the Church, upon doctrinal and practical questions, are, it must be admitted, at variance with the spirit of Christianity, and had they not been predicted, and the cause to which they are to be ascribed, been pointed out, must have excited astonishment, since all are ready to appeal to one correct and consistent word. The contemplation of them is a source of anguish to every mind which unites piety and sensibility. A desire to see them terminated, and a union of all the disciples of Christ effected, upon principles that promise stability to the pacification, will consequently put the friends of truth and peace upon the investigation of the causes which conspire to perpetuate discord among brethren. And

surely if one practice be discovered, which is calculated to prevent the "unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace" they will not hesitate for a moment with regard to the course they are to pursue. The practice which produces or promotes division cannot be scriptural. That is obvious. Such is the use of the supposed liberty of Christians to compose Hymns for themselves or others in the worship of God. The use of that supposed liberty will not merely prove the occasion but the cause of the perpetuity of division. So long as parties hold different opinions, it would be vain to expect that the Hymn-Books composed by conflicting partisans should not partake of the opposition of their authors, unless they should purposely employ equivocal language, or, as one has chosen to express the same thing, "expressions" which "may *savour* of an opinion different from the readers" but "are capable of an *extensive sense*, and may be used with a *charitable latitude*." So long then as different parties persevere in the use of their respective collections of songs, exhibiting their peculiar and distinguishing opinions, and opposed one to another, unity is impossible, union can never be carried into effect. Conflicting Hymn-Books imply existing division, and must form a wall of partition which cannot be passed, which must be taken out of the way. But who shall yield to the other? It is not to be hoped that one shall yield to another. It is not desired. What course is more likely to present itself as practicable? Remove from the sanctuary every uninspired collection, call it Psalms, Hymns, what you will: and let all parties take

up that from which none can dissent—the Psalms of David. A desire of union and concord must bring the claims of the Book of Psalms before the church: and upon the altar of union and peace, it is most plain, every uninspired collection of songs, as to their use in the house of God, must be offered a sacrifice.

But have we any reason to hope for that oneness of opinion, which would peremptorily demand what many should think so expensive a sacrifice? The desire of union may bring forward a new subject of discussion, perhaps of division to no purpose. Shall that desire be gratified? The ultimate union of Christians is quite as certain as it is desirable. God has promised it, and it shall come to pass. He will carry forward his own work, and though hand be pledged in hand to keep them up, he will remove the barriers out of the way. He will constrain the people to hearken to the voice of him, who desires unity in the body of Christ, and to break down every wall of separation. There is an old prediction which has not yet been fulfilled; and which speaks with power in relation to this matter. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord bring again Zion." "With the voice together shall they sing." Then they shall use the same song. There shall not exist Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, expressive of conflicting sentiments. "They shall see eye to eye." Then they shall be united in their views and speak the same thing. It is deserving of very particular notice that the unity which is pre-

dicted is pointed out as the cause why they shall sing together. "Together shall they sing, *for* they shall see eye to eye."

But some will say, the Songs in the use of which they shall unite may not be the Psalms of David. Let them prove that they shall not. And in the mean time, till another book shall have been produced, by an inspired, or uninspired hand, or by the collective wisdom of brighter days, in use of which all shall agree, let us meet together in the use of the only one, the infallible correctness of which all must admit, that at present exists; lest, while we are stickling for a doubtful liberty, pleasing ourselves with the external beauties, the graceful movement and enchanting voice of the uninspired poet, we be found the enemies of peace in the Church and haply fighting against God.

"Arise, O God, plead thine own cause."

THE

ANCIENT HISTORY OF PSALMODY.

The preceding pages have fully shewn that *Scripture Psalms* are alone warranted by *Scripture*, to be used in the churches. We subjoin these few remarks to shew what was the opinions of our orthodox fathers upon this important subject. But as heresy was prevalent in the Church, even in the days of the Apostles, we cannot lay down their opinions as infallible. Scripture should be our only guide in all religious controversies, yet it may not be amiss to examine the opinions of orthodox divines, who had a better opportunity of knowing what was the apostolic practice than we have at this day. Judging from the infallible rule, viz. Scripture, we have as clear light as they, but as they had the advantage of time, we are willing to examine their practice. In doing this, we shall mention but a very few examples, but these will be of the best authority; and we will consider some of the grounds upon which the advocates of human compositions, build their arguments. Let us then see for whom their practice weighs. The advocates of uninspired Psalmody, urge, as proof, the letter writ-

ten by Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, in which, among other things, it is stated, that the Christians assembled on a certain day, "sung a hymn to Christ as God." But had they sung the 45th Psalm, they must literally have addressed Christ as God. Compare Psalm 45th, verses 1–9, with Heb. i. 8 and 9, and this will be evident. The only ground of quibble here, is on the term hymn, the usual version of *carmen*, which is the word used by Pliny. But every novice in the Latin language knows that *carmen* is a word of general signification, applicable to any poetic, and even prosaic composition.

Pliny further says, that the Christians sung or rehearsed (dicere) a poetic composition to Christ as God; hence some infer, that this could not mean Scripture songs. Such reasoning is mere cavilling. Had they sung the 45th, 47th, 68th, 89th, 102d 110th, 148th, and a number of other Psalms, they would have sung songs or hymns to Christ as to God. The Christians of that age were not ignorant of this. *Irenæus*, who was instructed by a disciple of the Apostle John, in proving the deity of Jesus Christ, urged the testimony of the 45th Psalm, (Milner's Ch. His.) Besides the facts related by Pliny, he learnt, not from an examination of their Psalm Book, but from apostate Christians upon their examination at his bar. These knowing that the Christians were persecuted because they persisted in worshipping Christ as God, would be very likely to state at his bar, what would be most likely to please the persecutors and save themselves. They knew that the Christians understood these

Psalms as relating to Christ, therefore they would be likely to mention this circumstance. Pliny, of himself, knew no difference between one collection of psalms and another. He was a heathen man, and all he knew he had learnt from the lips of others, therefore we can easily see whence he got this expression.

We will next consider the deductions of Basnage from *Tertullian*, which are brought forward as arguments for human compositions; they are these, that it was the practice, in certain companies, for individuals to be called forth in the midst of them, to praise God in songs, either from the *Scriptures*, or of their own compositions. We must here notice, that Tertullian is not speaking of the ordinary united singing in the Church; but of a particular practice, in some places, attended to by individuals. *Quisque provocatur in medium.* As Tertullian has not stated, so neither have we any ground to believe, that these meetings were for public worship, but merely the practice of individuals, in meetings for social entertainment. It therefore proves nothing.

Their next proof is from *Origen*, a contemporary of Tertullian, who writes thus, in his exhortation to the people: "*To strive by their hymns, by their psalms, by their spiritual songs, that they might obtain the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Origen, evidently alludes to the Apostolic language, Coll. 3. 16. And here, we think, it is not too much, to demand of our friends, who argue thus, to give some proof of the existence and public use in the Church,

in the age of the Apostles, of such hymns as they contend for. We think, it has been previously shewn, that none such existed at that time. And we also see, that the ancients frequently used the term hymn to signify David's Psalms, as will be more fully shewn hereafter.

We shall now proceed to consider, more fully, the practice of the Fathers, during the first five centuries, giving their own language, as proof of their sentiments. We shall also notice the objections or deductions drawn, from their expressions, by the friends of modern Psalmody.

Of the practice in the Apostolic age, there can be little doubt. Christ, frequently, appealed to the Book of Psalms, in proof of his glory. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude, that he and his Apostles sung the *Hillel*, (from the 113th to the 118th Psalms inclusive,) before they went out to the Mount of Olives. The Jews sung this *Hillel* at the celebration of the Passover; and as the proselytes, from the house of Israel, formed the nucleus of every church; they being very tenacious of their sacred writings; it is not probable that they would have been excluded from divine worship, without convulsing the Church. The freqnent appeals of the Apostles to these sacred hymns, in exhibition of Christ's character, too deeply impressed his church, to permit any dispute on this point. It was not then known, that their use "flattened devotion—made worship dull—darkened the views of God the Saviour, and tended to make heresy triumphant." No, the Book of Psalms was then understood, and its power felt by the church. How

could they be induced to regret their holy songs, when they heard Christ himself use them, and that too in midst of his agony on the cross, as we see in the beginning of the 22nd Psalm? Was this speaking of Christ to come? Was this not suitable to New Testament times? It speaks volumes. The Son of God, who was God himself and head of his church, would not use other words in this trying moment, than those he had given to his church, to sing his praises. They were not old and flat to Him. No, blessed be God, He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and the songs that praised Him then, will praise him forever. From every consideration we must conclude that Scripture Psalms were exclusively used in the Apostolic age.

With the first century, the last of the Apostles died. The church, in the second age, was less pure than in the former. But whatever was the Apostolic practice, was most likely to be the practice of the orthodox divines, in the period of which we speak. Pliny's letter, assures us, that Psalmody was a part of stated public worship. *Irenæus*, after the example of Paul, defended the divinity of Christ, by the 45th Psalm. *Tertullian* intimates, that Psalmody was a part of the ordinary worship of the church, in his day. He expressly mentions the fact, that in the African church, the 133rd Psalm was uniformly used at the administration of the Lord's Supper. Nor does he compliment those who used it, only on that occasion. "Ye know not to sing this Psalm, except when ye sup with many." He being then a Montanist, blames

this church for singing this Psalm, only on that solemn occasion, adding, "Ye know to weep only with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice;" and he praises the Montanists for using this Psalm frequently, or as his words are, "on different occasions." Plain as this expression is, some have taken hold of his censure of the African church, and infer from it, that no other Psalms were used either on a solemn or more common occasion. This is indeed a ridiculous sophistry and childish conclusion. It is, and has been the custom to use particular Psalms on these solemn occasions. According to their mode of reasoning, were this fact mentioned, we should conclude that they used none others, at any time. Or should it be mentioned that a church sung a certain Psalm on a certain day, we should conclude that no singing was used at any other time. By this way of reasoning we could prove any thing, even absurdities. And as Tertullian makes no mention of other than Scripture Psalms being used, to assert that there were others, is not to act the part of an enlightened instructer, much less of a pious disciple of Christ. They who reason thus, follow the example of those who say, that whatever is not expressly prohibited in the Bible, by name, is lawful. Theatres are no where expressly denounced in the Bible, therefore they are lawful. What grand, philosophical reasoning! Such reasoners would stand high in the schools of Popery.

We come now to the third century. The state of the church in this, was not better than in the preceding age. The testimony of history furnishes little light on the practice of this age,

as it respects Psalmody. Irenæus, Tertullian and others, of the last century, flourished in the beginning of this. The practice of the last century, was the practice of this.

Of the practice of the fourth century we know more. Its writers were more numerous and more reputable, than those of the third. *Jerome* of Palestine, "whose learned and zealous labours will hand down," says Mosheim, "his name with honor to the latest posterity," informs us, that the 31st and 45th Psalms were sung at the administration of the Lord's supper, as was the 133rd Psalm in the second century according to Tertullian. In this Jerome is supported by Cyril, of Jerusalem, his contemporary.

Augustine, who in talent and piety, was not surpassed by any in his age, testifies to the use of the Book of Psalms in the songs of the church. It was used by himself in his own church; and, as a thing in course, on one occasion he mentions the singing of the 65th Psalm, (Sermon 10th.) The high estimation in which he held these songs, appears from his 'Confessions.' "I read," says he, "with pleasure the Psalms of David; the hymns and songs of thy church moved my soul intensely; thy truth was distilled by them into my heart; the flame of piety was kindled, and my tears flowed for joy." (Confess. book 9th.) These hymns and songs, as appears from this book, were none other than the Book of Psalms. He relates now what took place at Milan, under the ministry of *Ambrose*, where he says, "This practice of singing had been of no long standing. It began about the year when Justina persecuted

Ambrose." (Milner's Ch. His.) From this expression, Mosheim, with other moderns, has fallen into a mistake, supposing that, because David's Psalms were at this time introduced into the Western Churches, other Psalms or Hymns had been previously used. But from all that can be learned, *no Psalmody* existed in the Western Churches previous to this time. Ambrose had used David's Psalms in his own church, and being persecuted, now introduced them into the Western churches. But even had it been stated, that other hymns were used by the western churches, it would prove nothing, unless the character of those who used them be also shewn. For it is granted, that human compositions were at this time used, but only in the heterodox churches. We have shewn that Augustine and Ambrose both used Scripture Psalms long before this, as appears from that book of confessions quoted, and that they and the orthodox divines approved of none others, will appear from their acts. In the decree of the council of Laodicea, held about the year 364, the following was an act: In Canon 59th, it is decreed, that no Psalms that are the composures of private persons, should be sung in churches, nor any books read that are not canonical. Here they oppose the Psalms to canonical writings, to shew that they considered human compositions and books, not canonical, of the same stamp. Again, when Augustine speaks of the effects of sacred music, he owns, "that the infirmity of nature may be assisted in devotion by Psalmody—When I remember my tears of affection at my conversion under the

melody of thy church, with which I am still affected, I acknowledge the utility of the custom." These Psalms he defended against revilers. "One Hillary," says he, "took every opportunity of loading with malicious censure the custom,—*that hymns from the Book of Psalms should be sung at the altar.* In obedience to the command of my brethren, I answered him." "The Donatists too," a fiery sect of enthusiasts, "reproached the orthodox," as the same venerable Father tells us, "because they sung, with sobriety, the divine songs of the prophets, while they (the Donatists) inflamed their minds with the poetic effusions of human genius." His estimate of this book may be learned from the fact, that in his last sickness, he had David's penitential Psalms inscribed upon the wall of his chamber, (Milner's Ch. His.) *Athanasius*, of Alexandria, the suffering witness of orthodoxy, used David's Psalms in his church. For this we have also the testimony of Augustine. When speaking of the abuse of sacred music, he adds, "sometimes I could wish all the *melody of David's Psalms* were removed from my ears and those of the church; and think it safer to imitate the plan of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who directed a method of repeating the Psalms more resembling pronunciation than music." That Ambrose used the Book of Psalms, is proven by the same testimony. (Augustine was himself, for a time, a member of the Church in Milan.) Thence it spread into all the churches of the west. "The people," says the historian, "were much delighted, their zeal for the doctrine of the Trinity in-

flamed," &c. The universality of the practice is evinced by the testimony of Jerome, already mentioned. "You could not," he says, "go into the fields, but you might hear the ploughman at his hallelujahs, and the vine-dresser chanting the Psalms of David." The testimony of *Chrysostom*, the eloquent patriarch of Constantinople, who flourished in this age, is full in point. He ranked high among the orthodox divines of his day. "All Christians," says this first of sacred orators, "employ themselves in David's Psalms, more frequently than in any other part of the *Old or New Testament.* The grace of the Holy Ghost has so ordered it, that they should be sung and recited night and day. In the church's vigils, the first, the midst, the last, are David's Psalms. In the morning, David's Psalms are sought for, and David is the first, the midst and the last. At funeral solemnities the first, the midst, the last, is David. *Many, who know not a letter, can say David's Psalms by heart.* In private houses, where the virgins spin,—in the monasteries,—in the deserts, where men converse with God,—the first, the midst, and the last, is David. In the night, when men are asleep, he wakes them up to sing; and collecting the servants of God into angelic troops, turns earth into heaven, and of men makes angels, chanting David's Psalms." How different are the sentiments of this pious father, from those of Dr. Watt, and many, even of our own day. Was this but a novel practice of the fourth century? Reader, I will not insult you by an answer. Consider well the language of the two last named fathers, and frame your own

answer; and surely you must say, be the Psalms of David right or wrong, they were the delight of our pious fathers.

We shall give but one example more, viz. *Cassian*, a writer of the fifth century, whose reputation for honesty is also unquestionable. In vindicating the religious order with which he was connected, he observes, "the elders have not changed the *ancient* custom of singing *Psalms*. The devotions are performed in the same order as formerly. The *hymns* which it had been the custom to sing at the close of the night vigils, namely, the 50th, 62d, 89th, 148th, and following *Psalms*, are the same *hymns* which are sung at this day." Could the singing the Book of Psalms, had it been a novel practice at this time, have been called an *ancient custom?* To make the matter more clear, he says, that which was an ancient practice, is the practice at this day, by which he means that there being no difference between this and ancient customs, this is orthodox. He defines no particular time, but speaks of the time as *ancient*, that is, long ago. Whereas had he spoken of a time, but lately past, he would have been more likely to have said, the former custom, or the late custom. Moreover, as the term *ancient* was often, if not generally, applied to the apostolic, or primitive times of the church, by the orthodox divines, we may receive it here in this sense. Besides, in order to vindicate the Egyptian monks from the charge of novelty, he tells us, that they sung the Psalms of David, and not hymns of human composure. How far then are they from the truth, who say,

that Scripture Psalms were one of the innovations of that age. Such we would warn, not to form opinions contrary to reason. It is also very whimsical to draw an argument for human compositions, from the fact that the ancient fathers use the term *hymn*. Cassian, with others quoted, has used the term *hymn*, and expressly told us, that by it he means the *Psalms of David*. And from the authorities quoted, we find that other psalms were designated by the terms, *human compositions*, *human inditing*, or some other such titles; and as we find in the writings of the fathers, that Scripture Psalms are frequently called *hymns*, we must conclude, that where this term is used without any explanation, that Scripture Psalms are alluded to. This conclusion is fair, and if attended to, would save much quibbling about the term *hymn*. We shall, perhaps, more fully shew the real meaning of this word in our concluding section.

Many such objections, as those mentioned, are here presented, but we shall notice only one, for the purpose of shewing the candor of some who reason on subjects pertaining to matters of faith and Christ's glory. It is this, "that Scripture Psalms were introduced by Arian influence." This argument is nothing short of blasphemy, and we believe the greater part of the maintainers of human Psalmody, would shudder to use it; yet it has been used. To say, that God *ever* gave to his church a collection of Psalms, which denied Christ as the eternal begotten son of God, yet equal to the Father,—which asserted that there was a time when he existed not, and these

Psalms to be sung to his praise, is at once denying Him in his very essence. Besides the argument is absurd. The Arians knew very well, that the Psalms were once and again quoted in the New Testament to prove the divinity of Christ, and they would not be very desirous of such songs. And we have also the testimony of Tertullian, of Jerome, of Cyril, of Augustine, of Chrysostom and of Cassian, that they were used by the orthodox and reviled by the heterodox churches. Those who have presented this argument are perhaps not aware, that Arius, the founder of the Arians, instituted songs to his own praise. Such would not well accord with the songs of God's chosen people.

We have now taken but a cursory view of the ancient practice of the Church, with respect to Psalmody, but we have noticed the principal objections against Scripture Psalms, that have been drawn from the writings of the ancients. All the writers quoted are of the best authority, such as have ever been esteemed the most orthodox of their times.

With you, reader, we leave the inevitable conclusions that follow the examination of the practice of the primitive churches. Judge candidly. It is not for yourself alone that you here sit as judge, but for your God and Saviour Christ our Lord. If you find that he has appointed songs for his church, willingly lay aside all your youthful attachments, and come out boldly for the truth as it is in Jesus. Rather would I be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in tents of sin.

MODERN HISTORY OF PSALMODY.

It appears from the records of the early periods of the church, that Christians in their public assemblies, praised God in the language of scripture songs. It also appears that the term hymn was applied to David's Psalms. We have also seen, that though Psalmody was universal in the eastern churches from the beginning, yet it was not general in those of the west before the fourth century. In that age, it likewise appears to have been the practice of certain heretics, to reproach the orthodox for singing with sobriety the divine songs of inspiration, preferring to them the inflammatory compositions of their own inventions. We now turn to the history of Psalmody in later times. As this may be, generally, better understood than in the times previous, we propose to be very brief.

In the middle ages, times of moral darkness and superstitious degradation, the purest section of the church of God was found in the valleys of Piedmont. Among the Waldenses were found the simplicity of the apostolic order, and the purity of evangelical worship. They sung, "'mid Alpine rocks," the Psalms of Scripture. And

long before the Reformation dawned on Europe they sung them in metre. "The Albigensis in 1210 were metre psalm-singers." The morning star of the Reformation used them. *Wickliffe*, of the 14th, and *John Huss*, of the 15th, century, sung the Psalms in metre. These were not friends, either to papal domination or Arian heresy. But what was the course pursued at the Reformation, that time when God in so peculiar a manner poured his blessing upon his church, by freeing her from popish slavery? The reformers celebrated the praise of their Redeemer; and they did so in the use of Scripture songs. Luther, as early as the year 1525, published a metre version of the Psalms. In the same year, at Augsburg, was published a poetic translation of the whole book, by another hand. In the year 1543, under the auspices of Calvin, 50 of the Psalms, translated into verse by *Marmot*, a refugee from papal persecution, were printed at Geneva. Marmot died shortly after this, and *Beza*, the devout, learned and polished companion of Calvin, versified the remainder. The whole book, thus versified, was in a few years published. Such was the demand then for the Book of Psalms, that the press was unable to meet the demand. In 1553, the use of it was interdicted by a bull from Rome. The protestants of that day did not perceive that it dulled their worship; nor did the perverters of the church's faith hope to derive any benefit to their cause from its use. It was devoutly sung by the reformers and burlesqued by the papists. In England the friends of reform were the friends of the Bible Psalms.

For their use, some of the Psalms were versified by *Wyatt* and others, but a full version was not obtained till the accession of Elizabeth to the throne. The year 1562 presented that by *Sternhold, Hopkins, Cox, Norton*, &c. This was used in the Church of England, till superseded by the more imperfect version of *Tate and Brady*, in the year 1696, having been then in general use for more than a century. In 1562, a commotion being about reformation in Psalmody, the Puritans urged "that *the Psalms* should be sung distinctly by the whole congregation." Amidst these commotions, some of the reformers, for a little, hesitated whether Psalmody should exist in the church, but none who admitted the propriety of singing, ever doubted the evangelical character of the Psalms, or hesitated to use them in divine worship.

In the Scottish church, the reformers, from the first, practiced Psalmody. It is said they sung the Book of Psalms in prose; in which way if still used, would prevent much difficulty and contentions about versions. Before 1546 there is no authentic account of any use of metred Psalms in that church, but both before and after that period, in one form or other, the Book of Psalms was uniformly employed in their congregations. In 1649 the General Assembly at Edinburgh, adopted the version which she still uses. The ground-work of this was laid by Sir *Thomas Rouse*, who is represented as a man of piety. It was recommended to the attention of the assembly of divines at Westminster. Under their inspection, in the course of several years, it was

improved. It was then forwarded to the north, and was by the supreme judicatory of the Scottish church, delivered to committees for revision. Years were by them employed in comparing it with the original Hebrew, and in attempting to carry as much as possible of the spirit of the primitive composition into the translation, (Acts of Assembly, pp. 353, 428, 479.) And the man of literature and taste, who will examine the subject, it is believed, will admit, that they succeeded well. Like the version of the Bible, this of the Psalms is not remarkable for elegance of diction; but it is remarkably literal. To present the Book of Psalms in its native simplicity, beauties and force, was the aim of the Westminster divines, as well as of the Assembly at Edinburgh. To the man of God, to the child of grace, and man of legitimate taste, these characteristics must be a recommendation. *Dr. Ridgely*, that prince of theologians, in his system of divinity, is not only decidedly among those, who think the Book of Psalms suitable to the New Testament church, but also gives his opinion in favor of the Scottish version, and the preference above every other. Boswell, the friend of Johnson, also gives it his approbation. He says, after examining it carefully, "it is in vain to think of having a better. It has in general a simplicity and unction of sacred poesy; and in many parts its transfusion is admirable." In the American churches this version was extensively used; and in all the Presbyterian churches of the southern and middle states, till a recent period, none other was admitted.

We must here add the opinion of the justly

celebrated *Rev. William Romaine.* "Sternhold and Hopkins," he observes, "had a scrupulous regard for the very words of Scripture—the versification is not always smooth,—but what is a thousand times more valuable, it is generally the sentiment of the Holy Spirit. This should silence every objection,—*it is the word of God.* This version comes nearer the original than any I have seen, except the *Scotch*, which I have made use of when it appeared to me better expressed than the English. Here is every thing great, and noble, and divine, though not in Dr. Watts' way or style. It is not—as good old Mr. Hall used to call it, *Watts' jingle.*" (Romaine's works, vol. 8, p. 339.)

Early in the last century, Dr. Watts', in England, published his Imitation of David's Psalms, accompanied with other hymns. These he introduced to public notice by prefaces, containing a bitter libel against the original songs of Zion. All who have examined history, can know the state of the church at this time. The days of puritanic zeal had passed away. Infidelity spread her wings and visited every corner of the land, and even the sons of Zion escaped not from a maddening philosophy, which threatened afterwards to desolate the heritage of God. At such a time came Dr. Watts with his Imitation. Considering the state of the church at that time it is not strange that he was acceptable to many. But the character of those who opposed him, will plead strong. Let us again quote Romaine, (vol. 8th, p. 321.) "Human compositions are preferred to divine. Man's poetry is exalted

above the poetry of the Holy Ghost. The word of man has got a preference in the church above the word of God. It is not difficult to account for this *strange* practice. Our people had lost sight of the meaning of the Psalms. *They did not see their relation to Jesus Christ.* This happened when vital religion began to decay among us, more than a century ago."

The pious fathers and our reformers of popery had long used the Holy Psalms of Scripture, but this age was tainted with a religion of another cast. Then it was that Dr. Watts dared to provoke God and insult his humble worshippers, by declaring that the use of Scripture Psalms "flattened devotion, awakened regret, and touched all the springs of uneasiness in the worshipper's breast." Such was the unhallowed language of Dr. Watts. This Imitation of the Psalms, and the hymns of Dr. Watts, found their way into our country, and gradually obtained footing in the Congregational churches of New England. As these advanced the Scripture songs retired, and with them no small share of the orthodoxy, and piety, and holy practice that had distinguished the puritans of our country, the descendants of the pilgrims. The Synod of New York and Philadelphia, now the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, had continued to employ the Scripture Psalms, and in that version used in the Church of Scotland. Their connexion with the Congregationalists of New England, contributed to recommend to their attention the Imitation of Dr. Watts, as improved by Mr. Barlow. It was at length adopted by the supreme judicatory of

this Church; and thus, for the first time, a judicial sanction was given to that composure, declaring it more fit for Christian worship than a correct version of inspired Psalms. Since that time other changes have been made by the same church. They have become weary of Watts, and have in many places introduced others, to the rejection of Watts, who was formerly so excellent, that inspiration itself was far behind him. The more modern History of Psalmody is well known to all. We have given as brief and yet accurate an account as we possibly could. And we hope these pages shall not be run over without one reflecting thought. Ye have seen the spirit of zeal that burned in the breast of the reformers, and yet they used Scripture Psalms. Luther, Calvin, Huss and others thought they worshipped God aright when they praised him in his own words. And that most reverend and learned body, the Westminster Assembly, gave their sanction to David's Psalms. What have you against them? Whose opinion do you oppose to them? Blush not, fair reader, when I say Watts, yes, Dr. Watts' opinion against that of the Westminsrer Assembly! You have now a brief history of Psalmody before you. By it you may see and learn the opinions and practices of those fathers whose names we reverence. Where are all the hymns gone, that were used in early ages? God has given them to the moles and to the bats, but he has preserved the songs of Zion.

APPENDIX.

CONCERNING THE VERSION

WHICH is used in the Church of Scotland, and by Presbyterians of Britain generally, a few sentences may suffice. The defence of the version enters not into the determination of the inquiry respecting the obligation of Christians to abide by the Scripture Psalms. Doctor Burns, late of St. Johns, N. B., whose character as a man of talent and of taste is unquestioned by all who have known him, and is proved by the few publications of which he is the author, could discover no such barbarism in Rouse's version as was sufficient to justify its expulsion, and the introduction of Songs which *as such*, cannot by *any* be considered scriptural. His words are, "The version of the Psalms now adopted as the national Psalter, was introduced by the joint authority of English and Scottish Parliaments, and ratified by the General Assembly of the Church on the 23d November, 1649. The translation was made by a very distinguished Hebrew scholar, Francis Rouse, Esq. M. P. one of Cromwell's Counsellors of State, and preferred, on account of his acquaintance with the Greek and Latin languages, to the Provostship of Eton

School. His translation underwent various corrections by a committee of the General Assembly. In many instances, the versification is far from being smooth or agreeable to the ear. The fact is, *a literal* was more an object of attention than an elegant translation, and we have the satisfaction to know, that we utter praise in the very words of inspiration. Our version is capable of the same defence with that of Sternhold and Hopkins, formerly used in the churches both of England and Scotland, as compared with the one now authorised in the sister establishment. 'The Book of Psalms,' says that celebrated oriental scholar, the late Bishop Horsley, 'is a compendious system of Divinity for the use and edification of the common people of the Christian church. In deriving the edification from it which it is calculated to convey, they may receive much assistance from a work which the *ignorance of modern refinement* would take out of their hands, I speak of the old singing Psalms, the metrical version of Sternhold and Hopkins. This is not what I believe it is now generally supposed to be, nothing better than an awkward version of a former English translation. It was an *original* translation of the Hebrew text, earlier by many years than the prose translation of the Bible, and of all that are in any degree paraphrastic, as all verse in *some* degree *must* be, it is the *best* and most exact we have to put into the hands of the common people. The authors of this version considered the verse merely as a contrivance to assist the memory.'"—Hear what Boswell, the man whom Johnson numbered

among his friends, says in his life of that extraordinary man. "Some allowance must no doubt be made for early prepossessions. But at a maturer period of life, after looking at various metrical versions of the Psalms, I am well satisfied that the version used in Scotland, is, upon the whole, the best, and *that it is vain to think of having a better.* It has in general a simplicity, and unction of sacred poesy; and in many parts its transfusion is admirable."

We will now conclude this work by annexing a few general observations. And, in the first place, we will notice one difficulty that presents itself in singing David's Psalms, viz. "that in singing we must always consider the words as our own." Nothing conld be further from the nature of singing than this. We are to sing of past mercies to the church, as well as present. If we sung only our own words our praises would indeed be selfish. Besides this would place the inevitable necessity, that every one have a song composed to sing of his particular mercies. But let us put the matter home, and ask the objector, whether all that sing Watts could use these words:

> By long experience have I known
> Thy sovereign power to save;
> At thy command I venture down
> Securely to the grave.

How, according to this way of reasoning, could any use these words? Or how did they sing in the congregation of Israel such a passage as this, "My heart is fixed: I have more understanding than all my teachers?" Could all say so? Or how, after their return from Babylon, when they

had no king, could they sing the words of the 132d Psalm, "The king trusteth in the Lord?" This reasoning must, upon reflection, appear absurd to every one. For we may say, in the language of an eminent divine, "May we not bless and extol that God in praises, who hath redeemed others from those sins under which we groan? and may not the singing of this contribute to the strengthening of our faith and hope of the like redemption? and may not we in singing of such experience of others, be raised up to see what an high and rich favor it is to be blessed with such redemption? and cannot all this be done without hypocrisy?" It must be plain that whilst we sing in our own words, we may also sing in the words of others. Without this, the singing of the Israelites was in many instances not only nonsense, but palpable falsehoods. In the second place, it would be confounding singing with prayer. But the Scripture plainly distinguishes between these two exercises, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, also, James v. 13. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing Psalms." In prayer we consider the words as our own, but not so in singing. In prayer the thoughts and affections suggest the words; but in singing it is just the reverse; for the words we sing, rightly understood, suggest matter of believing meditation; and thus kindle spiritual and devout affections.

There is also a great antipathy expressed to Rouse. But it would be well to remember, that almost every argument brought against Rouse, at least nearly all I have ever heard, might with

the same propriety be brought against the Bible itself. Rouse's version has been acknowledged to be as literal as the Bible prosaic version. It is as smooth; and in what is it inferior to the Bible? Is it said Rouse was not inspired? Neither were the translators of the Bible. They merely translated poetry from one language into another. What more did Rouse? They translated poetry into prose, but he translated poetry into poetry, so if there be any difference, it is in Rouse's favor. Has he added some few words, not in the original? So have the translators of the Bible, not only in the Psalms, but in every book. However, neither have added more than they could possibly help, whilst Watts has added as many as possible. There is a great difference between a translator trying to translate literally, and one who does nothing but paraphrase, and would not translate, even if capable. The former is Rouse, the latter is Watts. At least it is a sorry argument against Scripture Psalmody to object to Rouse. All who use Rouse, are ready any moment to give him up, if a better can be given them. We would conclude these remarks, in the language of a modern writer. "The name of *Rouse* has come to bear about the same relation to Psalmody, which that of *Calvin* bears to the *doctrines of grace.* The name of the latter is odious to all those who would improve on the theology of the Bible, and the name of the former is odious to all who would improve on its Psalmody. Poor Rouse was so unfortunate as to be the instrument in the hand of Providence, to furnish a version of the Psalms, which the General

Assembly of the Church of Scotland judicially preferred to every other, "as more smooth and agreeable to the original text," and judicially appointed to be sung in their churches; a version which is now sung by that church, in Great Britain and Ireland, by the churches in her connexion in North America, by the Seceders in Scotland and Ireland—there a numerous body—and by various denominations in the United States, which, though comparatively small, are rapidly gaining in numbers, and will compare favorably with other denominations in point of orthodoxy and piety—a version which like the translation of our Bible, now in use in our tongue has remained the same for ages, while other versions (if they deserve the name) have been undergoing constant changes, and never giving satisfaction. Because of his connexion with this version, his name is covered with reproach by thousands who would do well, if they should ever render a tithe of the service which he has done to the church of Christ; but his name will be respected by the lovers of a Scriptural Psalmody, and the word of God."

Reader, when you have perused this little volume, consider carefully and prayerfully, if Scripture Psalms be not suitable to the present time, and whether God will accept of any others. When you sing them you know you are singing the word of God, which is always true, but when you sing human compositions, you have need to compare it with Scripture to learn whether it be true; and then you have but your own wisdom to decide.

Every church must have a collection of Psalms,

why then not take the one God has given them? With you and your God I leave the result—cast off all prejudices, and in the presence of God decide. And may the spirit of truth guide thee into all truth.

A Treatise of Psalmsody
1837

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